A Priest for All Generations

An Investigation into the Use of the Melchizedek Figure from Genesis to the Cave of Treasures

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Finally, I dedicate this study to my father Jørn, who passed away as the final chapters were being written. He taught me that the best kind of knowledge to have is that which is learned for its own sake, and for this reason, this dissertation is dedicated to him.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

General

AB	Anchor Bible
ACW	*Ancient Christian Writers*. 1946-
AJSL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature*
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ArBib	The Aramaic Bible
ANF	*Ante-Nicene Fathers*
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt.* Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase. Berlin. 1972-
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum: Series latina. Turnhout, 1953–
CSCO	Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium. Edited by I. B. Chabot et al. Paris, 1903-
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
EDSS	*Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls.* Edited by Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000
EEC	*Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*. Edited by E. Ferguson. 2d ed. New York. 1990
FC	Fathers of the Church. Washington, D.C., 1947-
GCS	Die griechische christliche Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism*
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism: Supplement Series
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigraph: Supplement Series
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
NHS	Nag Hammadi Studies
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements

NTS	*New Testament Studies*
OECT	Oxford Early Christian Texts
OTP	*Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.* Edited by J. H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. New York, 1983
PTS	Patristische Texte und Studien
RB	*Revue biblique*
REJ	*Revue des études juives*
RevQ	*Revue de Qumran*
SAC	Studies in Antiquity and Christianity
SBLBMI	Society of Biblical Literature The Bible and its Modern Interpreters
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSP	*Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SJS	Studia Judaeoslavica
StPB	Studia post-biblica
STDJ	*Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZRGG	*Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*

Ancient Texts

Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

1 En.	*1 Enoch*
2 En.	*2 Enoch*
3 En.	*3 Enoch*
Jub.	*Jubilees*

Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Texts

CD	Cairo Genizah copy of the *Damascus Document*
GenApo	1Qap Gen^{ar} – *Genesis Apocryphon*

Philo

Abr.	*De Abrahamo*
Agr.	*De agricultura*
Cher.	*De cherubim*
Conf.	*De confusione linguarum*
Congr.	*De congressu euditionis gratia*
Deus.	*Quod Deus sit immutabilis*
Ebr.	*De ebrietate*
Fug.	*De fuga et inventione*
Gig.	*De gigantibus*
Her.	*Quis rerum divinarum heres sit*
Ios.	*De Iosepho*
Leg. 1, 2, 3	*Legum allegoriae* I, II, III

Legat.	*Legat ad Gaium*
Migr.	*De migratione Abrahami*
Mos. 1, 2	*De vita Mosis* I, II
Opif.	*De opificio mundi*
Plant.	*De plantatione*
Praem.	*De praemiis et poenis*
QE 1, 2	*Quaestiones et solutions in Exodum* I, II
QG 1, 2, 3, 4	*Quaestiones et solutions in Genesin* I, II, III, IV
Somn. 1, 2	*De somniis* I, II
Spec. 1, 2, 3, 4	*De specialibus legibus* I, II, III, IV
Virt.	*De virtutibus*

Josephus

A.J.	*Antiquitates judaicae*
B.J.	*Bellum judaicum*
C. Ap.	*Contra Apionem*
Vita	*Vita*

Ancient Christian Writings

1 Clem	*1 Clement*
Dial.	*Dialogus*
Pan.	*Panarion*

Talmud, Targumic, and Related Literature

Frg. Tg.	*Fragmentary Targum*
Gen. Rab.	*Genesis Rabbah*
Lev. Rab.	*Leviticus Rabbah*
Ned.	*Nedarim*
Num. Rab.	*Numeri Rabbah*
Tg. Onq.	*Targum Onqelos*
Tg. Neof.	*Targum Neofiti*
Tg. Ps.-J.	*Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

"There is probably no more enigmatic a figure
in all of scripture than Melchizedek,
and no more difficult a problem in biblical studies
than tracing the Melchizedek tradition
through its various developments
in Jewish and Christian literatures"[1]

1.1 Aim and Scope of the Study

This dissertation traces the literary life of Melchizedek through eight centuries of Jewish and Christian writings. Melchizedek, a figure often described as mysterious and enigmatic, appears only twice in Hebrew Scripture, but during the following centuries resurfaces numerous times in extraordinary ways. From his first enigmatic appearances in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110, Melchizedek finds new life in early Jewish, Christian, and Gnostic literature. In each literary incarnation, successive generations appropriate the figure of Melchizedek to exegete their own religious concerns through a unique combination of traditional and innovative elements.

We here analyse and compare more than forty religious texts featuring the Melchizedek figure (ranging from ca. 400 B.C.E. to 400 C.E.) and their exegetical treatment of the figure. The purpose of this study is to critically analyse these ancient sources to establish how and why they present Melchizedek in diverse ways, and to delineate the theological role played by Melchizedek in them. This analysis will allow better understanding of the theological purpose behind each occurrence, and also of the way in which the authors arrived at their particular understandings of Melchizedek. The question of intertextual relationships will be discussed with the aim of illuminating the sources of inspiration of some Melchizedek figures and their dependencies upon earlier versions of the figure. This should give a more qualified answer to the question of whether elements

[1] Richard Longenecker, "The Melchizedek Argument of Hebrews: A Study in the Development and Circumstantial Expression of New Testament Thought", in *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology: Essays in Honor of George E. Ladd* (ed. Robert A. Guelich; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1978), 161.

shared among the texts constitute parallel developments or dependencies on earlier Melchizedek figures.

The analysis of the texts will identify the central characteristics of the Melchizedek traditions, which may be divided into three interpretative categories. The first category consists of texts in which Melchizedek is primarily used neutrally, whether to extol another figure—as is done with Abraham in Gen 14—or to expound upon a specific theological point of interest, such as the circumcision in Cyprian of Carthage's *Ad Quirinum*. The second category consists of those texts in which the Melchizedek figure is treated in a polemical way. Here we find a figure whose importance is lessened, or removed, as in the *Nedarim* tractate of the Babylonian Talmud. The third category is exemplified by the *Melchizedek Tractate*, and contains texts in which we find an exalted Melchizedek. In these, the figure has ceased to be human and has become a semidivine being.

We analyse the texts in terms of these three categories and their pattern of neutral, polemical, and exalting treatments of the Melchizedek figure in order to attempt to identify reasons for this particular figure featuring so frequently in ancient religious texts, and for the choice of this particular figure from among the broad range of characters available in Scripture. The dissertation will demonstrate how and why the various religious communities chose to use the Melchizedek figure, and why others felt it necessary to produce texts countering it. The analysis will explain why Melchizedek surfaces in so many Jewish, Christian, and Gnostic writings of antiquity. The result will further our knowledge of Melchizedek's place within Second Temple Judaism, the worldview of the religious communities attracted to him, and the conflicts they were involved in.

In order to present the development of Melchizedek, a chronological arrangement has been chosen for the first chapters (Ch. 2 and 3). The later chapters (Ch. 4 to 6) are also ordered chronologically, but within the three categories of interpretation. Unfortunately, several of the writings in question have compositional dates that remain difficult to ascertain. In order to present an exhaustive treatment of Melchizedek traditions, it will sometimes be necessary to employ flexible inclusion criteria. The goal has consistently been comprehensiveness: all documents from Genesis to the end of the first century, and the majority of texts from the second to the fourth century, that present an identifiable understanding or use of Melchizedek have been included. This does not mean that all texts receive equal treatment. The earlier sources are treated more extensively, to better establish the parameters of the three categories. Later writings can be discussed more succinctly, situating their presentation of Melchizedek within the already-established lines of interpretation. Some texts contain only passing or unproblematic references to Melchizedek, and these will require only brief treatment.

1.2 Sources

The material analysed in the present study consists of texts dating from ca. 400 B.C.E. to 400 C.E. that mention or clearly refer to Melchizedek. Such texts are numerous and diverse in time period, language, and religious setting. We begin our analysis with the two earliest extant appearances of Melchizedek, both of which are found within Hebrew Scripture (Gen 14:18–20, Ps 110:4; Ch. 2). Then we discuss the large number of Melchizedek texts composed before the end of the first century C.E. (Ch. 3). These are the *Greek Fragment on the Life of Abraham*, attributed to Pseudo-Eupolemus, the *Book of Jubilees*, the *Genesis Apocryphon* (1QapGen^{ar}), the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (4Q400–407; 11Q17; Mas1k), 4Qʿ Amram (4Q543–549), 4Q426, and *11QMelchizedek* (11Q13). Included in this chapter are the references to the Melchizedek figure from Philo of Alexandria's *Quaestiones in Genesin*, *De Abrahamo*, *De congressu gratia*, and *Legum allegoriae*, the *2 Book of Enoch*, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and Flavius Josephus' *Bellum judaicum* and *Antiquitates judaicae*.

The remainder of the dissertation is divided into three sections, each devoted to further examples of the categories of interpretation previously established. The first of these sections consists of texts that treat the Melchizedek figure neutrally (Ch. 4). These are Justin Martyr's *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, Theophilius of Antioch's *Ad Autolycum*, Tertullian's *Adversus Judaeos* and *Adversus Marcionem*, Cyprian of Carthage's *Ad Quirinum* and *Ad Caecilium*, *Targum Onqelos*, and the Talmud *Baba Batra* tractate. The following chapter investigates texts that treat Melchizedek polemically (Ch. 5), namely Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata*, the *Fragmentary Targums*, *Targum Neofiti*, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, and the Talmud *Nedarim* tractate. The subsequent chapter presents the texts that exalt the figure of Melchizedek in various ways: the *Melchizedek Tractate*, the *2 Book of Jeu*, the *Pistis Sophia*, the *Bala'izah Fragment No. 52*, the Talmud *Sukkah* tractate, and the *Cave of Treasures*. That chapter also includes evidence of the continued belief in an exalted Melchizedek found in the works of the following Christian authors: Hippolytus' *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, Pseudo-Tertullian's *Adversus omnes haereses*, and Epiphanius of Salamis' *Panarion*.

1.3 Earlier Research: Some Remarks

Despite the ancient interest in Melchizedek, revealed by the large number of texts in which he appears, modern study of the figure did not begin in earnest

until Moritz Friedländer's two-part essay, published in 1882 and 1883.[2] Positing a connection between the Epistle to the Hebrews and a Melchizedekian sect, Friedländer argued that the author of Hebrews must have been a former member of this pre-Christian sect, or at least familiar with its theological doctrines, and that this knowledge influenced his writing.[3]

A few decades later, four additional studies appeared, presumably spurred by Carl Schmidt's publication of manuscripts in which Melchizedek appears (such as *Pistis Sophia* and the *Books of Jeu*). The first of these was the inaugural dissertation of Franz J. Jérôme, written in 1917 and published in 1920.[4] The first half of this work consists of an investigation of the then-available sources, from Genesis to the later Christian authors. The second part is an exegetical study focusing on the traditions as they apply to the figure's appearance in Hebrews. Jérôme concludes that the figure of Melchizedek in Hebrews is "echt paulinisch", and serves as Scriptural-typological evidence for the superiority of Jesus' priesthood over the Levitical—an argument that Jérôme believed to be aimed at Jewish readers.[5] In 1926, Gustave Bardy published the first part of his treatment of Melchizedek in *Revue biblique*, with the second instalment appearing the following year.[6] This study focused primarily on the figure's role in later patristic times, but includes a treatment of the earlier writings. Bardy

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[2] Moritz Friedländer, "La secte de Melchisédec et l'Épître aux Hébreux", *REJ* 5 (1882): 1–26; Moritz Friedländer, "La secte de Melchisédec et l'Épître aux Hébreux", *REJ* 6 (1883): 187–199. Earlier works had only limited influence on later research. These include *Sermon of Maister Iohn Caluin, On the Historie of Melchisedech: Wherein is Also Handled, Abrahams Courage in Rescuing His Nephew Lot: And His Godliness In Paying Tithes to Melchisedech. Also, Abrahams Faith, in Belieuing God: Comprehending Foure Sermons. And, Abrahams Obedience, in Offering His Sonne Isaack; In Three Sermons. Translated out of French, by Thomas Stocker, Gent* (London: Iohn Windet, 1592); Hugh Broughton, *A Treatise of Melchisedek, Proving Him To Be Sem, The Father of All the Sonnes of Herber, the Fyrst King, and All Kinges Glory* (London: G. Simson & W. White, 1591); A Country Gentleman, *Melchizedek Found: Or, a Small Treatise, Shewing, by Invincible Testimonies of Scripture and Reason, Who Melchizedek, the King of Salem, Was. Written by a Country Gentleman* (London: T. Norris & W. Bonny, 1713); Josiah Sherman, *The History of Melchizedek, King of Salem: And of Redemption by Jesus Christ, King of Righteousness and Peace* (Litchfield: T. Collier, 1786); James Gray, *A Dissertation, On the Coincidence between the Priesthoods of Jesus Christ & Melchisedec* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Jane Aiken, 1810) (n.v.).

[3] Friedländer's idea of Gnosticism as a phenomenon originating in Palestine, predating the Christian era, has since been partially vindicated in Birger A. Pearson, "Friedländer Revisited: Alexandrian Judaism and Gnostic Origins", *Studia Philonica* 2 (1973): 23–39.

[4] Franz J. Jérôme, *Das Geschichtliche Melchisedech-Bild und seine Bedeutung im Hebräerbriefe* (Freiburg: Caritasdruckerei, 1920; not from 1927 as stated by Fred L. Horton, *The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century A.D. and in the Epistle to the Hebrews* [SNTSMS 30; Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1976], 5).

[5] Jérôme, *Melchisedech-Bild*, 97–98.

[6] Gustave Bardy, "Melchisédech dans la tradition patristique", *RB* 35 (1926): 496–509; Gustave Bardy, "Melchisédech dans la tradition patristique", *RB* 36 (1927): 25–45.

concluded that the Melchizedekian sect was largely an invention of Epiphanius (cf. Section 6.5)—a conclusion also reached by Hellmuth Stock, who in 1928 published a monograph focusing on the Melchizedekian sect.[7] At the same time, another monograph was published by Gottfried Wuttke. Although Wuttke focused primarily on the figure of Melchizedek in Patristic literature, he also included discussions of the canonical writings, of rabbinic material, and of later texts, all in seventy-six pages.[8]

Within the last century, several new approaches to the Melchizedek figure have been made possible by three important developments: the publication of *2 Enoch* and the discovery of manuscripts at Qumran and at Nag Hammadi. These have provided new presentations of Melchizedek, though ones very different from those hitherto extant. Successive waves of studies devoted to the figure of Melchizedek appeared, often providing an intertextual comparison with one or more of the "traditional" Melchizedek texts. Rather than providing a complete historical survey of the vast number of scholarly treatments, which would include numerous commentaries on Genesis and Hebrews, we here present a brief introduction to the major studies that have dealt specifically with the figure of Melchizedek across a number of ancient texts.

The earliest and most influential of these monographs is Fred Horton's *The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century A.D. and in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, published in 1976.[9] This work shed new light on most aspects of the figure of Melchizedek by summarizing the knowledge available at that time. Although Horton analysed texts from Genesis to the Christian era, he focused chiefly on Hebrews and on the Melchizedek traditions that could have influenced it. Horton's study was hampered by the fact that several discoveries had not yet been fully published when he was writing. He thus mentions only briefly or not at all some important writings that are today central to the understanding of the figure's early developments (such as *2 Enoch*). Although a number of his conclusions were made on the basis of premises that have since changed, Horton's work remains an important investigation into early Melchizedek traditions.

A similar endeavour was carried out by Claudio Gianotto in *Melchisedek e la sua tipologia: Tradizioni giudaiche, christiane e gnostische (sec. II a.C.–sec III d.C.)*, in which he surveys Melchizedek traditions.[10] This work is more complete

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[7] Hellmuth Stock, *Die sogenannten Melchizedekianer mit Untersuchungen ihrer Quellen auf Gedankengehalt und dogmengeschichtliche Entwicklung* (Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons und der altkirchlichen Literatur 9:2; Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1928).

[8] Gottfried Wuttke, *Melchisedech der Priesterkönig von Salem: Eine Studie zur Geschichte der Exegese* (BZNW 5; Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1927).

[9] Horton, *Melchizedek*.

[10] Claudio Gianotto, *Melchisedek e la sua tipologia: Tradizioni giudaiche, christiane e gnostische (sec. II a.C.–sec III d.C.)* (Supplementi alla rivista biblica 12; Brescia: Paideia Editrice, 1984).

than Horton's, including as it does discussions of manuscripts that Horton had omitted and of those that had appeared in the intervening eight years. Unfortunately, Gianotto's study has only been published in Italian, which has severely limited its impact. It is thus rarely cited in the relevant commentaries.

Last in this list is Peter Balla's *The Melchizedekian Priesthood*, from 1995.[11] In just sixty-nine pages, Balla manages to investigate the Melchizedek figure in a scope similar to Gianotto's. Balla's work on the Melchizedek figure closely follows the structure of Horton's, and in most areas agrees with his findings, although Balla suggests that the nonbiblical Melchizedek traditions influenced Hebrews to a greater extent than allowed by Horton.

All three scholars have presented thorough studies of the Melchizedek texts, yet each has excluded important data. Despite their later publication dates, the studies of Gianotto and Balla lack any discussion of *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, which may be the first example of an exalted Melchizedek, and of *2 Enoch*, with its extraordinary Melchizedek figure. These texts are of central importance in understanding the development of the Melchizedek figure.[12]

Rather than surveying the relevant texts chronologically, some scholars have proposed typologies for understanding why certain texts invoke the figure of Melchizedek. Two sophisticated typologies come from Birger A. Pearson and Marcel Poorthuis. Pearson divides the texts that depict Melchizedek into two distinct trends.[13] The first consists of the texts in which Melchizedek appears as a "heavenly, semidivine being". This includes texts such as 11Q13 and the later "Melchizedek heresies" referred to by early Christian writers. Pearson further distinguishes an eschatological variation, exemplified by the Bala'izah fragment, the *2 Book of Jeu*, and *Pistis Sophia*. The second trend consists of those texts that depict Melchizedek as a human being, for example, Josephus' two references, the *Greek Fragment on the Life of Abraham*, and later rabbinic

[11] Peter Balla, *The Melchizedekian Priesthood* (Budapest: Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem Hittudományi Kara, Ráday Nyomda, 1995).

[12] Recently there has been more interest in the figure of Melchizedek, as evidenced by Eric F. Mason's "'You Are a Priest Forever': Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews", in *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 74* (ed. Florentino García Martínez; Leiden: Brill, 2008), a presentation of Jesus as a high priest in Hebrews. In his review of the conceptual background to Hebrews, Mason devotes part of his book to the study of the Melchizedek figure in Second Temple Judaism. This study is not only one of the most recent, but is also especially thorough in its analysis of the Qumran sources and of the indications that the figure of Melchizedek may have played a greater role in sectarian literature than previously assumed. More recently, the conference papers from the Fifth Enoch Seminar have been published: Andrei A. Orlov, Gabriele Boccaccini, and Jason Zurawski, eds., *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only* (SJS 4; Leiden: Brill, 2012), which includes seven papers on the Melchizedek tradition indicating the importance of *2 Enoch* to our understanding of the Melchizedek figure.

[13] Birger A. Pearson, "Melchizedek in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Gnosticism", in *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible* (ed. Michael E. Stone and Theodore A. Bergren; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1998), 198–200.

writings. This division recognizes a distinct tendency in certain texts to exalt Melchizedek to divine or semidivine status—an advance on which the present dissertation partially builds. However, Pearson does not differentiate between the neutral uses of the figure (as in Josephus) and the polemical uses (as in the *Palestinian Targumim*).[14]

A different division of the material was suggested by Marcel Poorthuis, who provided a brief but detailed attempt to describe the various shifts that the Melchizedek figure underwent in ancient sources.[15] Poorthuis divides the Jewish and Christian sources into five stages, according to their exegetical treatment of the "intermediary" figures of Enoch and Melchizedek, arguing that these two figures experienced comparable exegetical treatment in the sources.[16] Poorthuis' five stages consist of: 1) the Jewish interpretation of Melchizedek as an intermediary, with 11Q13, *2 Enoch,* and Philo exemplifying this stage; 2) the Christian appropriation of Melchizedek, as illustrated by Hebrews (itself influenced by 11Q13 according to Poorthuis) and the writings of Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria; 3) the Jewish reaction to the Christian appropriation of Melchizedek, as seen in the Targumim, and later rabbinic writings; this trend includes attempts to reclaim Melchizedek for the Jewish tradition (as in *Genesis Rabbah*) and to downplay his importance (as in the Targumim); 4) the Christian abandonment of Melchizedek as intermediary, in which Christian authors abandoned Melchizedek because of "internal-Christian Christological controversies"; In order to ensure the inimitability of Christ, anything that could be associated with angelo-Christologies was censured, including the Melchizedek figure. Thus, Melchizedek's role as a prefigurement (as in Hebrews) "increasingly threatened orthodox Christology". This threat began in the third century, according to Poorthuis, who provides the *Cave of Treasures* and the late orthodox Christian authors (as in Philastrius) as examples; 5) Jewish rehabilitation of Melchizedek, in which later Jewish texts (such as *Se'udat Liwyatan*), whose authors no longer interact with Christians, return to the figure of Melchizedek, unencumbered by polemical concerns.[17]

Poorthuis' five-stage model presents a convincing development of Melchizedek traditions in Jewish and Christian writings, although our analysis will show things to be more complicated. However, two elements of it are useful. First, Poorthuis demonstrates that both Jews and Christians responded polemically to the speculation on the Melchizedek that was current in sectarian

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[14] Pearson does recognize that rabbinic texts diminish the role played by Melchizedek, and that later Christian authors began to "pose counterinterpretations of Hebrews 7 to combat the 'heretical' view that Melchizedek is a heavenly being", ibid., 199.

[15] Marcel Poorthuis, "Enoch and Melchizedek in Judaism and Christianity: A Study in Intermediaries", in *Saints and Role Models in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. Marcel Poorthuis and Joshua Schwartz; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 99.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., 112–119.

communities. Stage one (and to a lesser extent stages two and five) corresponds well to our third interpretative category, that of exalted texts, while stages three and four are comparable to our category of polemical texts. Second, Poorthuis successfully identifies the interdependent relationship between the two categories. The exaltation of Melchizedek in one tradition necessitates a polemical text to counter it. However, Poorthuis' emphasis on the developments *within* the polemical category does not lead him to discuss the reasons behind the constant reappearance of the exalted traditions in the first place.

This dissertation will build upon the significant contributions advanced by these scholars. However, it will go beyond them in several ways. First, it will deal with a larger corpus of texts for analysis and will give them a more thorough exegesis. Second, it will offer substantially different conclusions with regard to several important matters of textual interpretation. Finally, it will seek to provide an answer to the question of why the exalted Melchizedeks were created, and why sectarians differing in language, religion, geographic location, and time continued to appropriate him over and over.

1.4 Notes on Sects and Rewritten Bible

1.4.1 The *Anstalt* and the Sectarians

Many of the texts studied in this dissertation have been classified at one time or another as *sectarian*. This requires some remarks on the definition of the term "sect", although Lester L. Grabbe's wry comment is worth bearing in mind: "you can waste a lot of time with definitions".[18] Hence, the aim in the following is not to establish all-encompassing new terms, but to identify a range of pragmatic definitions for use in this dissertation. The classic model of the sociology and definition of sects remains that of Max Weber.[19] His ideal-typical

[18] Lester L. Grabbe, "When Is a Sect a Sect—or Not? Groups and Movements in the Second Temple Period", in *Sectarianism in Early Judaism: Sociological Advances* (ed. David J. Chalcraft; London: Equinox, 2007), 114.

[19] I have, in the following, relied primarily on the summary of Weber's work in David J. Chalcraft, "The Development of Weber's Sociology of Sects: Encouraging a New Fascination", in *Sectarianism in Early Judaism: Sociological Advances* (ed. David J. Chalcraft; London: Equinox, 2007), 26–51; David J. Chalcraft, "Towards a Weberian Sociology of the Qumran Sects", in *Sectarianism in Early Judaism: Sociological Advances* (ed. David J. Chalcraft; London: Equinox, 2007), 74–104; and David J. Chalcraft, "Weber's Treatment of Sects in Ancient Judaism: The Pharisees and the Essenes", in *Sectarianism in Early Judaism: Sociological Advances* (ed. David J. Chalcraft; London: Equinox, 2007), 52–73.

methodology operated with two polar types of religious communities: the Church (*Kirche* or *Anstalt*) and the Sect (*Sekte*).[20] The defining features separating these two etic types are their organizations and membership requirements. The *Anstalt* constitutes a hierocratic structure of organized religion (be it Judaism, Christianity, etc.) with compulsory (*anstaltmässig*) membership.

The sect, by contrast, requires voluntary (*voluntaristisch*) membership achieved through religious qualification.[21] Sects are segregated communities withdrawn from the larger parent organization, the *Anstalt*. Weber regarded members as psychologically strong-minded individuals who possessed the required self-esteem (*Selbstgefühls*) and self-assertion (*Selbstbehauptung*) to separate from the larger and more secure hierocratic organization of the *Anstalt*—an evaluation that tended to remove the negative connotations from the term *sect* in Weber's writings.[22] Although Weber never defined the ideal type of sect through a lengthy list of attributes, he recognized sectarian tendencies (e.g., that a sect often developed as the result of a strong central priestly aristocracy (*geistliche Aristokratie*) and saw theological conceptions as one of the primary motivating factors in the development of sects. Weber's model has been further developed by Bryan Wilson, who advanced the definition of a sect as a "minority religious movement" that demands total domination over the member's life and total commitment.[23]

The Weberian *Anstalt–Sekte* typology, when applied to the time period dealt with in this dissertation, presents a distinct problem: To what extent does the category *Anstalt*—with its connotations of cohesiveness and uniformity—apply to the period, characterized as it was by much ideological variety and a diversity of religious movements? We could argue that there was a central Judaism, a coherent and consistent religious system from which the separatist sects diverged or we could instead indicate that, in reality, there was little general religious consensus within prerabbinical Judaism, and refer instead to Judaism*s*.[24] Although no society or religion has ever been entirely homogenous, prerabbinic Judaism appears to have been especially pluriform in nature. The

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[20] Cf. Chalcraft, "Development", 27–28, and Chalcraft, "Treatment", 65.

[21] Cf. Chalcraft, "Development", 30–33, and Chalcraft, "Treatment", 74–76.

[22] Cf. Chalcraft, "Development", 52–56, and Chalcraft, "Sociology", 77-78, 102–103, who notes that the *sect* in Weber's understanding did not necessarily require a parent movement from which it had separated.

[23] Although one of Wilson's defining features of a sect is that it has no distinct ministry (Bryan Wilson, *Religious Sects: A Sociological Study* [London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970], 33–34), this is not the case with the majority of the sects we will be examining. Indeed, quite the opposite is the case, as we will argue that in many instances the figure of Melchizedek was used by sectarians to establish a sacerdotal ministry.

[24] See Philip R. Davies, "Sect Formations in Early Judaism", in *Sectarianism in Early Judaism: Sociological Advances* (ed. David J. Chalcraft; London: Equinox, 2007), 141, for a summary of this discussion.

textual evidence for conflicting traditions is clear. By the term *Judaism,* we will thus refer to an unknown number of distinct Jewish movements—not sects—within the larger *Anstalt*.[25] Accordingly, we will treat prerabbinic Judaism as an *Anstalt*, distinguished by its involuntary nature: one became a member of it through birth, whereas one chose to become initiated into a sect—an *Anstalt* that was not consolidated into a single Judaism until rabbinic times.

Following on Weber and Wilson's definitions, we will use their etic definition of the term *sect* neutrally, in order to designate a community seeking a significant degree of separation from its *Anstalt*. In our understanding, *sect* will refer to a minority religious movement characterized by the voluntary participation of its members. It is a schismatic, and often socially exclusive, religious group that has separated from a heteropraxis or *Anstalt*, to which the sect relates more than it relates to the world in general. Evidence for these sectarian tendencies occurs frequently in the literature under consideration in this dissertation. For our purposes, a sociological examination of the sects that produced these documents and the sectarians' everyday life is less important than the fact that these sects existed, that they produced texts revealing their schismatic nature, and that several based their religious identity on the figure of Melchizedek.

[25] As stated (ibid., 133), the heteropraxis [*Anstalt*] is that from which the sect "obtains some of its identity but against which it matches its identity also". The sect is thus schismatic by nature, contrarily to a *movement*. So for instance, the Pharisees, Sadducees, etc., would not be regarded as sects, as they continued to function within the larger society, and thus did not favour separatism. They remained movements within the *Anstalt*, whereas the sects saw themselves as separate (and legitimate) microcosms, separate from the *Anstalt*, cf. ibid., 135. This also corresponds to one of the criteria of Bryan Wilson, "An Analysis of Sect Development", *American Sociological Review* 24 (1959): 3–15, which states that one defining characteristic of a sect was that "dual membership" was not permitted; Baumgarten offers a helpful summary of what may be said in general concerning the Jewish sects: they "were relatively small, based on a small segment of the population as a whole. They were based on an educated elite, as opposed to the mass movements of lower-class origins and educational level typical of many modern groups. Some of the most extreme ancient communities, such as at Qumran, were places where everyone knew each other. They had a strong egalitarian streak" (Albert I. Baumgarten, "Information Processing in Ancient Jewish Groups", in *Sectarianism in Early Judaism: Sociological Advances* [ed. David J. Chalcraft; London: Equinox, 2007], 252. Beyond this, further accuracy in identifying the degree of sectarian characteristic of the groups responsible for many of these writings is impossible, due to the uncertainty of their provenance.

1.4.2 Rewritten Bible

The nature of this dissertation necessitates a discussion of the troublesome term *Rewritten Bible*, as a significant portion of the texts analysed here have been designated at one time or another as such, including the *Book of Jubilees*, the *Genesis Apocryphon*, and the *Antiquitates judaicae*. Ever since Geza Vermes first used the term fifty years ago, its potential has been widely recognized.[26] However, little consensus has been reached regarding its definition or merits. Critics of the term consider it too problematic, too restrictive, or too vague;[27] even supporters debate whether it should be viewed as a genre, a category, or an exegetical process.[28] It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to review all permutations of Rewritten Bible and the shifting corpus of texts included in its

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[26] Geza Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies* (StPB. JSJSup 4; Leiden: Brill, 1961). For a more comprehensive introduction to the *status quaestionis* of Rewritten Bible, see Moshe J. Bernstein, "'Rewritten Bible': A Generic Category Which Has Outlived Its Usefulness?", *Textus* 22 (2005): 169–196; Anders Klostergaard Petersen, "Rewritten Bible as a Borderline Phenomenon—Genre, Textual Strategy, or Canonical Anachronism?", in *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez* (JSJSup 122; ed. Anthony Hilhorst, Émile Puech, and Eibert Tigchelaar; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 285–307; Daniel A. Machiela, "Once More, with Feeling: Rewritten Scripture in Ancient Judaism—A Review of Recent Developments", *JJS* 61 (2010): 308–320; and Kasper Dalgaard, "Rewritten Bible – Vermes' Forbandelse?", in *Bibelske Genskrivninger* (Forum for Bibelsk Eksegese 17; ed. Mogens Müller and Jesper Høgenhaven; Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2012), 19–49. For the problems with Vermes' choice of words (both "Rewritten" and "Bible"), anachronistic and otherwise, see the preceding articles and James C. VanderKam, "Revealed Literature in the Second Temple Period", in *From Revelation to Canon: Studies in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature*, (JSJSup 62; ed. James C. VanderKam; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 1–30.

[27] E.g., Jonathan G. Campbell, "'Rewritten Bible' and 'Parabiblical Texts': A Terminological and Ideological Critique", in *New Directions in Qumran Studies: Proceedings from the Bristol Colloquium on the Dead Sea Scrolls, 8–10 September, 2003* (ed. Jonathan G. Campbell, Lloyd K. Pietersen, and William J. Lyons; London: T&T Clark, 2005), 50; and Antti Laato and Jacques van Ruiten, "Introduction", in *Rewritten Bible Reconsidered: Proceedings of the Conference in Karkku, Finland, August 24–26, 2006* (Studies in Rewritten Bible 1; ed. Antti Laato and Jacques van Ruiten; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 2.

[28] E.g., George W. E. Nickelsburg, "The Bible Rewritten and Expanded", in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum Ad Novum Testamentum 2; ed. Michael E. Stone; Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1984), 89–156; Natalio Fernández Marcos, "Rewritten Bible or Imitatio? The Vestments of the High-Priest", in *Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, and the Septuagint: Presented to Eugene Ulrich* (VTSup 101; ed. Peter W. Flint, James C. VanderKam, and Emanuel Tov; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 321–336; and Petersen, "Rewritten Bible".

definition. However, a review of the *status quaestionis* can point the way to our use of the term.

Vermes initially employed the term without definition; nor did he use it with any great degree of consistency. The term was applied by him to those Jewish texts that contain significant portions of haggadic material inserted as exegetical solutions to difficult passages.[29] Vermes has since modified the term numerous times, providing a more comprehensive designation of it as a genre that, through exegetical changes, attempts a "more advanced form of the sacred narrative".[30] In this genre, Vermes included narrative texts that "follows Scripture but includes a substantial amount of supplements and interpretative developments".[31]

Since Vermes introduced the term, scholars have continued to use it in a variety of ways. In 1988, Philip Alexander attempted to better define the borders of the Rewritten Bible genre with his presentation of the hitherto most comprehensive and specific set of guidelines. This consisted of nine points to be satisfied by any text that is to be included in the genre,[32] including the requirement that the narrative text replicate substantial amounts of the *Vorlage* in a sequential order (*centripetally*, rather than *centrifugally*).[33] Other scholars have preferred to use the term not as a genre, but as a description of an exegetical process[34] or of a literary style,[35] or as a useful etic category for compartmentalizing the ancient texts.[36]

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[29] Vermes, *Haggadic Studies*, 95.

[30] Geza Vermes, "The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ", in *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, 2 (ed. Geza Vermes et al.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 308.

[31] Geza Vermes, "The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ", in *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, 3:1 (ed. Geza Vermes et al.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 326.

[32] Philip S. Alexander, "Retelling the Old Testament", in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars, SSF.* (Edited by Donald A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson. Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1988): 116–118, and his note (ibid., 119n11): "Any text admitted to the genre [of Rewritten Bible] must display all the characteristics" (ibid., 119n11). Others who have argued that Vermes' Rewritten Bible constitutes a genre includes John C. Endres, *Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Jubilees* (CBQMS 18; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1987), 15–16, Bernstein, "'Rewritten Bible'".

[33] This latter being a term of Alexander's, "Retelling the Old Testament", 117, used to describe texts that "take as their starting point a single episode of the Bible, or a very short passage, and expand it almost beyond recognition".

[34] Examples of which include Nickelsburg, "Rewritten", 89;130, and Endres, *Biblical Interpretation*, 15–16.

[35] E.g., Marcos, "Rewritten Bible", 134.

[36] So described by Sidnie White Crawford, "The Rewritten Bible at Qumran", in *The Hebrew Bible at Qumran* (North Richland Hills, Tex.: Bibal Press, 1998), 177, and Petersen, "Rewritten Bible", 304–306.

According to the dominant definitions of Rewritten Bible, some of the texts to be analysed in this dissertation would satisfy all the genre guidelines, but the majority would be excluded, primarily because they exhibit a centrifugal approach or were not the product of Jewish exegesis. Yet the exegetical processes within these writings strongly resemble the phenomenon described by Vermes, Alexander, and others. Acknowledging that the inclusion of these texts within a Rewritten Bible genre could make it too inclusive to be of much use, we will leave aside the question of a more or less narrowly defined genre and look more closely at the origin of the exegetical process shared by these texts. This process came to be one of the primary exegetical approaches in Second Temple Judaism, and when we examine the scribal traditions practised by contemporary non-Jewish authors, we find them to be involved in comparable literary processes. A primary influence on the Jewish authors' newfound exegetical freedom came with the Wisdom traditions of Egyptian and Babylonian scribes.[37]

These ancient authors were proponents of a scribal tradition wherein the reworking of religious texts was not only permitted, but was a sign of respect to the *Vorlage*. According to this tradition, an extensive rewriting was successful if the original was thus transformed into a new literary composition through an interpretation of the original's "spirit", rather than its letter.[38] The resulting freedom to rework Scriptural texts and Jewish history is revealed by the textual pluralism apparent in Second Temple Judaism in texts that sought, through the rewriter's understanding of the "spirit" of the text, to present a new, improved interpretation of the *Vorlage*.

This free literary approach also shares significant similarities with the literary genre of *imitatio* (or *mimesis).*[39] Considering that ancient Jewish authors generally imitated most Greco-Roman literary genres, this "essential element in all literary compositions" may have played a significant role in changing the

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[37] John F. A. Sawyer, *Sacred Languages and Sacred Texts* (London: Routledge, 1999), 101.

[38] Cf. ibid., 101, and Marcos, "Rewritten Bible", 322. A similar external influence as the cause of the shift in exegetical focus has been suggested by Martin Hengel, "Judaism and Hellenism Revisited", in *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 13; ed. John J. Collins and Gregory E. Sterling; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 6–37. Hengel found that this "new genre of Palestinian rewriting" (ibid., 11) was caused by an outside influence that allowed the author to "emancipate" himself from the authority of tradition. This *Zeitgeist* provided the rationalistic necessity for a new systematizing of the sacred history of Israel based on the author's own theology as the proper interpretation, resulting in a process that "remained very influential for all later interpretations" (ibid., 12).

[39] On *imitatio*, see Sawyer, *Sacred Languages*, 101, Ellen Finkelpearl, "Pagan Traditions of Intertextuality in the Roman World", in *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity* (SAC; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2001), 82–84, and Marcos, "Rewritten Bible", 322–323.

scribal approach to allow rewritten texts.[40] The principles and conventions set forth in *imitatio* were followed in the extensive rewriting of Scriptural texts, producing new versions improved by their increased contemporary usefulness.[41] In particular, the surprising additions found in these rewritten texts (of which we will encounter a significant number in the Melchizedek texts) may be due to a subform of the *imitatio*, the *zelos* (or *aemulatio*). This genre similarly called for "emulation" of the *Vorlage*, but also stressed the need to improve upon it in order to provide a superior imitation "whether in literary expression, philosophical acuity, or religious power".[42] This result was often reached through the insertion of highly unusual additions in the rewriting. This process is similar to what is found in the texts from Second Temple Judaism that create superior religious figures and events; the additions to the Melchizedek figure are, as we will discover, examples of this kind of rewriting, producing figures that are superior in religious power. These additions should thus not be regarded as deviations from literary conventions, but rather as intertextual signals that mark a distinctive change introduced by the author in his attempt to surpass the original.[43]

These contemporary exegetical processes in the ancient world, all plausible influences on Jewish scribal practices, indicate that the exegetical process identified by Vermes' Rewritten Bible was not specific to the Jewish authors of Second Temple Judaism—only the focus on Hebrew Scripture was. The result of these influences was an increase in authors' freedom to interpret the "spirit" of the original texts, contributing to the multiple rewritings of the same text based on the author's theology and situational necessities. As the literary process of reworking authoritative texts was a common intertextual activity throughout the ancient world, Rewritten Bible may at best constitute a useful etic tool that characterizes the conscious exegetical changes performed by creative scribes who, like their (non-Jewish) colleagues, freely appropriated authoritative texts in order to emphasize what they believed were the correct theological interpretations. Thus, we will in the following refrain from using the term Rewritten Bible, instead employing the term "rewriting" to signify this common exegetical practice—the imitation, appropriation, and improvement of authoritative texts with the aim of creating a superior text.

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[40] Marcos, "Rewritten Bible", 322. Cf. Finkelpearl, "Pagan Traditions", 82–84.
[41] Cf. Marcos, "Rewritten Bible", 322–323.
[42] Dennis R. MacDonald, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), 6; cf. also Dennis R. MacDonald, *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity* (SAC; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2001), 1–2.
[43] MacDonald, *Mimesis*, 2.

CHAPTER 2. MELCHIZEDEK IN HEBREW SCRIPTURE

2.1 Genesis

2.1.1 Introduction to Genesis 14:18–20

The figure of Melchizedek does not feature predominantly in Hebrew Scripture, being discussed only twice: in Gen 14:18–20 and Ps 110:4. In the following, we will examine the particulars of these two occurrences and of the role played by the Melchizedek figure in them. Here our analysis reaches its first major problem: as mentioned in the introduction, this dissertation proposes to analyse the various Melchizedek figures in chronological order, yet such an arrangement enters choppy waters when it comes to the question of whether to begin with Gen 14:18–20 or Ps 110:4. The composition dates of these texts continue to be a disputed issue, and because the likeliest dates overlap, the choice of which text to grant precedence to remains largely a matter of conjecture. For these reasons, we will begin this study with Gen 14:18–20—not because the arguments for the precedence of this text are decisive, but primarily because the Genesis passage serves as a better starting point for our analysis than Psalm 110, as it both provides a brief introduction to the Melchizedek figure and describes its basic attributes, which will reappear in later Melchizedek traditions.

As mentioned, the provenance of Genesis—and thus of the Melchizedek episode in Gen 14—remains a contested question, and while a full exploration of the history of research into it goes well beyond the scope of this dissertation, a summary of the discussion shows that two time periods have gathered most support among scholars: Monarchic or Maccabean times.[44] The Monarchic hypothesis is founded on the episode's archaic

[44] Michael C. Astour, "Political and Cosmic Symbolism in Genesis 14 and in Its Babylonian Sources", in *Biblical Motifs* (ed. Alexander Altmann; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), 74, which suggested dating the episode to ca. 550 B.C.E. on account of its similarities to the Spartoli Tablets, represents the middle ground in this discussion. Astour's hypothesis now appears unlikely, as the Spartoli Tablets have since been dated to the 2nd century B.C.E.; cf. Francis I. Andersen, "Genesis 14: An Enigma", in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near*

material and its similarities to cuneiform annals of that time.[45] According to this hypothesis, the episode constitutes an attempt to legitimize a new ruling class by referring to the "historical" peaceful relations between Abraham the Jew and Melchizedek the Canaanite. The Maccabean hypothesis depends largely upon the suggested purpose of the episode—namely, that Gen 14:18–20 describes the postexilic problems between old and new traditions (represented by Melchizedek and Abraham respectively)[46] or an attempt during Hellenistic times to legitimize the priesthood's claim to rulership,[47] or that the episode served to commemorate the "founding father" (Melchizedek) of the priesthood of Zadok.[48]

The question of the provenance of the Melchizedek episode becomes yet more muddled when we turn to the redactional layers within Gen 14. The entire chapter appears to be an insertion into an older Abraham narrative.[49]

Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom (ed. David P. Wright, David N. Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 498, who (ibid., 499–503) presents an analysis of the terminology of Gen 14 used to describe the war (v. 8b). According to this study, the terms appear "realistic" and point to a period of time when chariots had not yet superseded infantry as the primary fighting force of early times. The war narratives also lack the histrionic details of the (according to Andersen) more sensational reports from later Maccabean times. Due to the chapter's vocabulary, Andersen suggests that the text was archaic and only partially updated. Loren E. Fisher, "Abraham and His Priest-King", *JBL* 81:3 (1962): 270, on the other hand, represents a more extreme dating; according to the interpretation here, the episode retells a historical account of an encounter between one Malkisedeq and Abraham during the incursions of the Hittites in the 14–13th centuries B.C.E.

[45] Cf., e.g., Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis übersetzt und erklärt*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1910, 263–266; John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (New York: Scribner, 1910), 270; Mathias Delcor, "Melchizedek from Genesis to the Qumran Texts and the Epistle to the Hebrews", *JJS* 2 (1971): 119; Robert Davidson, *Genesis 12–50* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 34.

[46] Margaret Barker, *The Older Testament: The Survival of Themes from the Ancient Royal Cult in Sectarian Judaism and Early Christianity* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), 253.

[47] Cf., e.g., John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1975), 305–308; and *Die Psalmen erklärt* (ed. Karl Marti; Kurzer Hand-Kommentar zum alten Testament 14; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1922), 400, who suggested that the Melchizedek story was tied to the Maccabean priest-kings; Yet, as noted in *Zadok's Heirs: The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 88–89, the priesthood would have been unlikely to use a Canaanite figure to legitimize their claims to the royal prerogative.

[48] Cf. Walther Zimmerli, "Abraham und Melchisedek", *Leonhard Rost Festschrift: Das ferne und nahe Wort*. BZAW 105; ed. Fritz Maass (1967): 259.

[49] Cf., e.g., Samuel R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis: With Introduction and Notes*, 15 ed. (London: Methuen, 1948), 166; John A. Emerton, "The Riddle of Genesis XIV", *VT* 21

The chapter also exhibits a number of internal discrepancies, indicating that the redactor responsible for including the passage combined several smaller passages, one of which being the Melchizedek episode. These discrepancies include the redundant introductory remark in 14:13 (*Abram the Hebrew* (לְאַבְרָם הָעִבְרִי)), the protagonist's shift from a "peaceful shepherd" to a warfaring general, the noticeable change in narrative style between vv. 1–11 and 12–24, and the lack of a continuous narrative flow within the chapter.[50] The Melchizedek episode, in particular, presents a distinct interruption to the narrative flow.[51]

The question of when the Melchizedek episode was composed, and when it was inserted into ch. 14 thus continues to be unanswerable because of the problems of dating Genesis and the difficult redactional history within ch. 14. These difficulties leave us with the bare essentials: that Genesis represents the oldest surviving narrative to mention Melchizedek, and that the final redaction of the Melchizedek episode must have been finished before the time when the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch split, as these versions present only a few minor variants, as will be discussed in the following analysis of the passage's content.

2.1.2 Melchizedek in Genesis 14:18–20

When we first encounter the Melchizedek figure, Abraham is returning from his successful campaign against the king of Elam, *Kedorla'omer* (כְּדָרְלָעֹמֶר). In 14:17, the unnamed *king of Sodom* (מֶלֶךְ־סְדֹם) goes to the

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(1971): 408; Bruce Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading*, 1 ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977), 197; Davidson, *Genesis 12–50*, 33.

[50] Hebrew text from Karl Elliger and Willhelm Rudolph, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, 5 ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997); Greek text of the Septuagintan traditions from Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt - Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, reprint 1979); and John Williams Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis* (SBLSCS 35; ed. Leonard J. Greenspoon, Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars' Press, 1993).
Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author's.

[51] Cf., e.g., Zimmerli, "Abraham"; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Melchizedek", *Biblica* 81 (2000): 63–69; Eric F. Mason, "Melchizedek Traditions in Second Temple Judaism", in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only* (SJS 4; ed. Andrei A. Orlov, Gabriele Boccaccini, and Jason Zurawski; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 344. Attempts to identify which documentary sources the material may have originated in have proven inconclusive, due to the uncharacteristic use of repetitions, formulae, and numerals in the passage, best summarized by Fitzmyer in "Melchizedek", 64: "this chapter is not part of J, E, or P".

Valley of Shewah (עֵמֶק שָׁוֵה, further explained in the text as the *Valley of the King* (עֵמֶק הַמֶּלֶךְ הוּא)) to meet Abraham. This meeting is abruptly interrupted by the Melchizedek episode, after which it resumes in 14:21, as though nothing had transpired. In between vv. 17 and 21, we are introduced to Melchizedek by way of his two titles: king of Salem and priest of El ʻElyon. This king-priest performs two brief actions—offering bread and wine—before blessing Abraham and El ʻElyon. Afterwards, we are told that *and he gave him a tenth of everything* (וַיִּתֶּן־לוֹ מַעֲשֵׂר מִכֹּל), an action which concludes the meeting between the two characters and marks the disappearance of Melchizedek from Genesis.

Genesis 14:18–20 presents a wide range of problematic issues. The first of these is the proper name "Melchizedek" itself (מַלְכִּי־צֶדֶק, LXX Μελχισέδεκ). While this name has been translated by both ancient and modern commentators as *my king is righteous*, other alternatives are possible: by emphasizing the name's two theophoric components (צדק and מלך), it could be rendered as *Sedeq is my king* or *Malak is righteous*, respectively.[52] Various scribal errors have also been suggested as the reason behind the name's sudden appearance in Gen 14:18: instead of a proper name, it may have resulted from misreading *Salem* as *Sodom*, with 17–20 then narrating the first part of the meeting between Abraham and the king of Sodom, named Melchizedek.[53] The passage in its current wording implies that "Melchizedek" should be read as a proper name—a name that, to the author, referred to a ruler of Jerusalem from the historical or mythical past, and who would be identifiable by the recipients of the original text.[54] Yet Gen 14:18–20, although a hypothetical discussion,

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[52] Cf. Fitzmyer, "Melchizedek", 66: "the name must have originally meant "[the god] Sedeq is my king". Roy A. Rosenberg, "The God Sedeq", *HUCA* 36 (1965): 163–165, provides examples of the theophoric element of Sedeq as found in other sources, both in the Amarna Letters, and in various Ugaritic and Babylonian sources—including the example of the king Amsa-du-qá. According to Rosenberg, 14:18–20 indicates the existence of a solar religion in Jerusalem, with Sedeq as the "deified attribute of the sun god". According to Delcor, "Melchizedek", 115, the first part of the name may also have referred to a divinity known from Assyrian, Mari, and Ugaritic sources.

[53] Cf. H. E. Del Medico, "Melchisédech", *ZAW* 69 (1957): 160; and Charles Edo Andersen, "Who Was Melchizedek? A Suggested Emendation of Gen. 14:18", *AJSL* 19:3 (1903): 176–177, who suggests that it was a case of mixed-up letters, and that by substituting the Lamed with a Dalet, reading "Melchizedek, king of Sodom", the text would become much less troublesome.

[54] So with Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs*, 85;101; Fisher, "Abraham and His Priest-King", *JBL* 81 (1962), 264–270; and Ephraim A. Speiser, *Genesis: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, 2nd ed. (AB; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), 104, who found Melchizedek to be the "Canaanite counterpart of Akk. Sarru(m) kên".

might as easily refer to a fictional character[55] as to a heroic individual of the past.[56]

In Gen 14:18, Melchizedek is described as located in Salem (שָׁלֵם), a name traditionally identified as an early synonym of Jerusalem. The arguments for this interpretation have been chiefly based on the equation between Zion and Salem in Ps 76:3 and in later texts.[57] Various explanations have been suggested, including the claim that the name Salem instead refers to a geographic location near Shechem, that there was indeed a city named Salem distinct from Jerusalem, or that it was the result of a scribal error.[58] These arguments were all carefully discussed by Emerton,

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[55] See above all Julius Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des alten Testaments* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1899), 311.

[56] So, e.g., Gunkel, *Genesis*, 284, who found a historical person to be most plausible due to the unlikelihood of the author having created a Canaanite as the first priest and ruler of Jerusalem. See also Skinner, *Genesis*, 270, and Speiser, *Genesis*, 108; James R. Davila, "Melchizedek: King, Priest, and God", in *The Seductiveness of Jewish Myth: Challenge or Response?* (State University of New York Series in Judaica: Hermeneutics, Mysticism and Religion; ed. S. Daniel Breslauer; Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1997), 229–230, suggests that there is a much more intricate history behind the appearance of the Melchizedek figure in Gen 14. According to Davila, Melchizedek was a historic figure who, after his death, was deified as an underworld deity. The figure was removed from the "literature of the pre-exile Israel" by the Deuteronomistic school, yet somehow managed to survive, and afterwards, according to Davila, became the exalted Melchizedek that we will encounter in later texts (e.g., *2 Enoch*, the *Melchizedek Tractate*).

[57] Cf. Driver, *Genesis*, 164; Gerhard von Rad, *Das erste Buch Mose (Genesis)*, 10th revised edition (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1976), 151; Speiser, *Genesis*, 104; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12–50* (Erträge der Forschung 48; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1975), 241; Davidson, *Genesis 12–50*, 38. Later examples of this identification is found in texts such as *GenApo* 22.13 and Josephus' *B.J.* 6.438 and *A.J.* 1.180–181.

[58] This question was the subject of an entire monograph from 1903 by Barnabé d'Alsace, *Questions de topographies palestinienne: Le lieu de la rencontre d'Abraham et de Melchisédech* (Jerusalem, 1903), yet remains debated. For more on this discussion, see Józef T. Milik, "'Milkî-sedek et Milkî-resa' dans les anciens écrits juifs et chrétiens", *JJS* 23 (1972): 137; John G. Gammie, "Loci of the Melchizedek Tradition of Genesis 14:18–20", *JBL* 90:4 (1971): passim, who provides a handy review of the discussion. Gammie also presents a detailed hypothesis in which the Melchizedekian priesthood over time moved from Shechem to Shiloh, Nob, and finally to Jerusalem. This hypothesis is intriguing, but Gammie fails to provide the required evidence of such a journey. Although he states that he has demonstrated the plausibility of his view, the hypothesis does not seem compelling and has not gained any scholarly consensus; Cameron Mackay, "Salem", *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* (1948): 121–130, argues that LXX viewed it as a different city from Jerusalem. However, as John A. Emerton "The Site of Salem, The City of Melchizedek (Genesis XIV 18)", in *Studies in the Pentateuch* (VTSup 41; Leiden: Brill, 1990), 52, has shown, this is unfounded, as LXX "simply transliterates the Hebrew place name in Gen. xiv 18". A plausible argument for

and here we will accept his conclusion that the most plausible explanation remains that Salem was an early synonym of Jerusalem, in particular because to the redactor of the chapter, this story appears to have served primarily to associate "Abram with a king whose city was of some importance and if the city in question was a minor location Melchizedek would have appeared more like a village priest than a king whose blessing would honour Abram and whose deity would be identified with Yahweh".[59] Although the discussion is hypothetical, it would seem a plausible explanation that, wherever the original setting for the Melchizedek episode, from the time of its interpolation into the Genesis narrative, Melchizedek's city was understood to be Jerusalem.[60]

We now turn from the name and location of Melchizedek to the two functions that he held. According to the Genesis narrative, Melchizedek served the city of Salem as both *king* (מֶלֶךְ) and *priest* (כֹּהֵן). Although these offices were traditionally separate in Hebrew Scripture, the two are combined in both Gen 14 and Ps 110. Initially, we need to note that Melchizedek is the first priest mentioned in Genesis. His priesthood is thus situated before the traditional Levitical priesthood, similarly to the scattered indications of priesthoods predating the Levitical priesthood

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Salem not being Jerusalem is that first proposed by S. Landersdorfer, "Das Priesterkönigtum von Salem" *Journal of the Society of Oriental Research* 9 (1925): 205–210. He argues that, while Shechem is mentioned frequently in the patriarchal stories (e.g., Gen 12:6–7 where Abraham visits Shechem), Abraham is nowhere said to have had any contact with Jerusalem, a city which plays little, if any, part in the patriarchal narrative. It has also been argued that, in the Amarna texts, Jerusalem is referred to as Urusalim, and that it is more commonly referred to as Jebus in Hebrew Scripture (e.g., Judg 19:10; 1 Chr 11:4,5). Emerton, "Salem", 64–69, concludes that Salem here should be interpreted as Jerusalem, because Gen 14 appears to be an interpolation, because Shechem only in Gen 33 points to Jerusalem, and because Salem could be the short form of Jerusalem. Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs*, 86, concurs, and adds that the thrust of Psalm 110 would lose much of its force if Salem in Gen 14 were not understood to be Jerusalem. See Andersen, "Who Was Melchizedek?", 176–177, William F. Albright, "Abram the Hebrew: A New Archaeological Interpretation", *BASOR* 163 (1961): 51–52, and Robert H. Smith, "Abram and Melchizedek (Gen 14 18–20)", *ZAW* 77 (1965): 141–145, for the view that Salem represents a scribal error.

[59] Emerton, "Salem", 68–69.

[60] This position may be summarized by the statement made in *On Genesis*, 197–198: that "Salem in the present context undoubtedly refers to Jerusalem". This position is strengthened by the identification of Salem with Jerusalem in *GenApo* 22.13: *He came to Salem, that is Jerusalem*. The most interesting aspect of the text as it appears in the Samaritan Pentateuch is perhaps what has not been changed—it is intriguing that the Samaritan concern with the priority of Mount Gerizim (e.g., SP Exo 20:17; SP Deut 27:4; cf. Robert T. Anderson, "Samaritan Pentateuch: General Account", in *The Samaritans* [ed. Alan David Crown; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989], 391–392) does not appear here, although a connection between Melchizedek and Mount Gerizim surfaces in the Pseudo-Eupolemus fragment, which will be discussed later.

found elsewhere within Hebrew Scripture (including Ira the Jairite (2 Sam 20:23–26), Zabud (1 Kgs 4:1–5), and the sons of David (2 Sam 8:18)). In addition, there are references that presume that the monarch was, at times, regarded as a priest and performed various priestly functions (as in 2 Sam 6:1–19, 1 Kgs 8:1–66 and 12:32–13:1, 1 Chr 15:1–16:3, and 2 Chr 5:2–7:10).[61] This "royal priesthood" differed from the traditional priesthood by not requiring priestly descent or daily cultic activities, and by the king remaining a priest throughout his life, "whether he liked it or not, because of the sonship granted to him by the deity".[62]

At least two distinct priesthoods have been identified in the Pentateuch by Rooke: the priesthood of the high priests (the "functional" priesthood) and that of the monarch (the "ontological" priesthood).[63] The ontological priesthood had a privileged relationship with God, on account of the king being understood as the son of God and being endowed with the Spirit of God as a result of his coronation ceremony.[64] It appears that the description of the priest-king Melchizedek was influenced by ancient Near Eastern traditions, and the early interpretation of the Jewish king attributed priestly functions to it. The "king as priest" model has been suggested as a continuation of the sacral kingship model found elsewhere in the ancient Near East, in which the king functions as the mediator between humanity and its deities, modified by God adopting the king as son (as in Ps 2:7).[65]

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[61] Cf. Gard Granerød, *Abraham, Melchizedek and Chedorlaomer: An Attempt to Read Genesis 14 as the Work of Scribal Activity and Second Temple Times* (Oslo: Det teologiske menighetsfakultetet, 2008), 196: "it is *probable that the pre-exilic kings of Israel/Judah had priestly functions*" (author's emphasis). Among the above listed references are examples of David wearing priestly clothes, sacrificing, and issuing the priestly benedictions (2 Sam 6:1–19); Cf. Eugene H. Merrill, "Royal Priesthood: An Old Testament Messianic Motif", *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150:597 (1993), 60. In addition, Solomon was depicted as sacrificing, blessing the assembled people, and dedicating the temple, serving as "the chief sacrificial and priestly intermediary between Yahweh and the people during his reign", according to Carl Edwin Armerding, "Were David's Sons Really Priests?", in *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation: Studies in Honor of Merrill C. Tenny, presented by His Former Students* (ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1975), 81–82; Cf. Gerald Cooke, "The Israelite King as Son of God", *ZAW* 73 (1961): 202–225; Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs*, 81n6.

[62] Rooke, "Royal Priest", 81–82.

[63] Ibid.; Rooke, "Kingship as Priesthood", *JSOTS* 270, 189.

[64] This distinction between the ontological and the functional priesthoods may very well have created cultic tension, yet Horton's argument (Horton, *Melchizedek*, 45–52), that the priestly title attributed to Melchizedek does not imply any cultic activities and should instead be understood as describing the office of a secular chieftain (or administrative official), appears to be unfounded; Cf. Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150* (WBC 21; ed. David A. Hubbard and John D. W. Watts, Revised Edition; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 2002), 81.

[65] Cf. John Gray, "Canaanite Kingship in Theory and Practice", *VT* 2 (1952): 193–220.

The text in Genesis also describes the deity served by Melchizedek: he is a priest of El ʻElyon, *God Most High* (כֹּהֵן לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן, LXX ἱερεὺς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου). Although both El and ʻElyon are referred to frequently in the Hebrew Bible, this specific combination only occurs elsewhere in Ps 78:35 (אֵל עֶלְיוֹן, LXX 77:35 ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὕψιστος).[66] In the case of Psalm 78, the "hyphenated"[67] appellation is clearly used as a synonym for Yahweh, and it was probably also the intention of Gen 14 to refer to Yahweh by this archaic name.[68] This god may be derived from the divinity traditionally associated with the Melchizedek figure, but by treating it as a synonym for Yahweh, the Melchizedek episode now emphasizes that Abraham's miraculous victory was instrumented by Yahweh.

After the introduction of Melchizedek and the God he served, three actions are described: Melchizedek offers wine and bread (14:18), blesses Abraham and El ʻElyon (14.19–20a), and then there is a brief exchange of tithes (14:20b). It has been suggested that the first of these actions, the offering of wine and bread, is the remnant of a cultic offering.[69] Rather than

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[66] In Semitic mythology, there are frequent references to both El and ʻElyon, which is to be expected as "El" is "the appellation for 'god' in all Semitic languages", G. Levi Della Vida, "El ʻElyon in Genesis 14 18–20", *JBL* 63 (1944): 2, but we also find the titles referring to individual deities in the surviving fragments of Sanchunyathon, various Greek and Aramaic inscriptions, Ugaritic poems, and the Sefire steles. In these, El and El ʻElyon are two separate deities; ʻElyon associated with the highest heavenly sphere, and El with the earth. Although the combination of the two is unknown in Canaanite mythology, Vida refers to inscriptions wherein the combination of the two appellations appears to describe a single deity, the "Lord of Heaven and Earth", who "has been artificially set up through the combination of El the Lord of Earth with ʻElyon the Lord of Heaven. In other words, he is the result of theological speculation" (ibid., 2–3). Rosenberg, "The God Sedeq", 36, instead suggests that the deity originally served by Melchizedek was Sedeq; and Martin Bodinger, "L'énigme de Melkisédeq", *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 211: 3 (1994): 297–333, developed this idea further, proposing that the figure of Melchizedek was originally the Semitic (solar) deity Sedeq himself, who served the "Most High God" and was the commander of his angels. Both hypotheses are fascinating (especially considering the later developments to the figure), but are not supported by any known sources.

[67] To use a term prevalent in Egyptology to describe these fluid connections of different gods; e.g., Klaus Koch, *Geschichte der ägyptischen Religion: Von den Pyramiden bis zu den Mysterien der Isis* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1993), 40.

[68] Cf. Mason, *"Priest Forever",* 141, who concludes that Melchizedek is here "most certainly implied" to be a priest of Yahweh. Cf. Vida, "El ʻElyon", 9, who highlights the problems of equating El ʻElyon with any specific deity; Horton, *Melchizedek*, 20, on the other hand, states that "it is well attested that El Elyon was a Phoenician deity".

[69] E.g., Gammie, "Loci", 390–392; According to James E. Coleran, "The Sacrifice of Melchisedech", *Theological Studies* 1 (1940): 35–36, the Waw in v. 18 should be translated as "since", i.e., the gifts were given because Melchizedek was a priest; and John F. X. Sheehan, "Melchisedech in Christian Consciousness", *Sciences*

the singular לֶחֶם, LXX has bread is in the plural (ἄρτους), and MS *b* inserts αυτω, emphasizing that the bread and wine were intended for Abraham.[70] As the Melchizedek episode provides no indication of any liturgical function attached to this offering, it would appear more plausible that Melchizedek's offering of bread and wine is to be interpreted as a welcoming gift to the visiting dignitary, Abraham. This also follows the customs seen elsewhere, for example in 2 Sam 16:1–8, where Ziba provides David with bread and wine.[71]

With regards to the twin blessings contained in 14:19–20a, we have already touched upon the deity called upon by Melchizedek to bless Abraham and whom he subsequently blesses, but in 19 we find an additional definition of El 'Elyon: he is said to be the *creator* (or *possessor*) *of Heaven and Earth* (קֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ, LXX: ὃς ἔκτισεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν). And in 20a, Abraham's victory is attributed to the fact that El 'Elyon *delivered your enemies into your hand* (אֲשֶׁר־מִגֵּן צָרֶיךָ בְּיָדֶךָ, LXX: ὃς παρέδωκεν τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποχειρίους).[72] While the Masoretic versions of 14:19–20a have בָּרוּךְ in both verses, LXX switches from the participle εὐλογημένος in 19 (in which Abraham is blessed by a dative of means: Αβραμ τῷ θεῷ τῷ ὑψίστῳ) to εὐλογητὸς in 20a. According to Wevers, this change serves to create a "subtle but important" distinction whereby "God is a blessed one as a statement of fact; Abram was blessed by God as a process".[73] Although the Samaritan versions of Gen 14:18–20 are generally similar to the Masoretic versions, the only variant is found here in v. 19, where an object for the blessing has been inserted: ויברך את אברם

Ecclésiastiques 18 (1966): 137, also found the text to exhibit a distinct "sacral character", and saw the offering as an example of a "sacred ritual of hospitality". Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* (London: Chapman, 1971), 244, has dismissed these ideas, indicating that there is a lack of any tradition of interpreting the text in this way. He notes that the Waw may indicate what follows, just as well as what proceeds.

[70] Cf. Wevers, *Notes*, 197–201; Fitzmyer, "Melchizedek", 63–67; Mason, *"Priest Forever",* 139–140; Mason, "Melchizedek Traditions", 344, who suggests that this variation may be the origin of the later concept that Melchizedek fed not only Abraham, but his entire army.

[71] Cf. Emerton, "Salem", 58.

[72] The blessings have been suggested to contain poetic elements, such as multiple parallelisms and a 2+2 metrical structure; cf. Driver, *Genesis*, 165; Horton, *Melchizedek*, 16.

[73] MS C does not have this differentiation and uses the same participle in both verses; cf. Wevers, *Notes*, 198–199.

(*and he blessed Abram*).[74] The sequence of the two blessings—Abraham first and El ʻElyon second—is something that, in later traditions, will come back to haunt the Melchizedek figure, as we will discuss in the latter half of this dissertation.

The last action of the meeting is the tithing in 14:20b. Although interpreters and translators (both ancient and modern) generally identify Abraham as the one who tithes Melchizedek, this is not clear in either Masoretic (וַיִּתֶּן־לוֹ מַעֲשֵׂר מִכֹּל) or LXX versions (καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ δεκάτην ἀπὸ πάντων). Both traditions are ambiguous in regards to whether Melchizedek or Abraham *gave a tenth of all*. As 20b continues from 20a with a conjunction, the logical subject would be Melchizedek, and the recipient thereby Abraham (the later MSS *Cat* and *b* solve the problem by inserting Αβραμ as the subject for ἔδωκεν). Thus, the logical conclusion from the text is that the intent was that Melchizedek tithed Abraham. This discrepancy between the recipient in the text and in later traditions and translations may have been influenced by the traditional payment of tithe to the temple and its priesthood. If it was indeed Melchizedek who offered tithe to Abraham, the passage is considerably more troublesome to explain: either Melchizedek gave tithe in order to save Salem from being conquered by Abraham,[75] or the tithe was required because Melchizedek and his kingdom were allied with Abraham.[76] If instead it were Abraham who paid the tithe, the passage would need little explanation: in return for the blessing, or to offer thanks for his miraculous victory, the patriarch gives a tenth of his possessions to his god through the priest-king Melchizedek. This could conceal an attempt on the part of the redactor to predate the concept of tithing and to give it added importance by associating it with both Abraham and the "historic" priest-king of (Jeru)salem, Melchizedek, in order to discourage the administrative and socioeconomic changes of later times (a critique similar to that of Zech 9–14), and to emphasize the ancient role of the Temple in connection with the collection of taxes.

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[74] This minor explanatory change appears to be a later tradition, according to the principle of *lectio difficilior potior*. The examination of the Samaritan Pentateuch was made possible by Benyamim Tsedaka who, via email (23 August, 2010), kindly allowed me preliminary access to the Samaritan text and his translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch (later published as Benyamim Tsedaka and Sharon J. Sullivan, *The Israelite Samaritan Version of the Torah: First English Translation Compared with the Masoretic Version* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2013]). In addition, see Mark Shoulson, *The Torah: Jewish and Samaritan Versions Compared* (Westport, Ireland: Evertype, 2008), 32–35.

[75] Cf., e.g., Smith, "Abram", 131–139.

[76] Cf. Fitzmyer, "Melchizedek", 67.

2.1.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in Genesis 14:18–20

The preceding analysis of the Melchizedek episode in Gen 14:18–20 shows indications that the succinct narrative was inserted into an earlier, larger narrative structure. The purpose of this insertion is revealed by the passage's description of Melchizedek: the figure is presented as the righteous priest-king, first to serve at the temple in Salem (presumably Jerusalem)—elements that establish the importance of the figure. Additionally, the actions performed by Melchizedek reveal why importance is ascribed to the figure: Melchizedek travels to meet Abraham and offers the patriarch bread, wine, and blessings (and, depending upon the interpretation of 14:20b, may have given tithe). These are all actions directed towards Abraham, whereby the passage emphasizes the Melchizedek figure's subjugation to the true protagonist of the story, Abraham. The Melchizedek episode thus corresponds well with the primary purpose of the Abraham narrative—to extol the patriarch.

The reason behind Melchizedek's insertion into the narrative was the redactor's intention of using a mythical character to lend importance to the patriarch. This aim of the text makes it plausible that a Melchizedek was known to both the redactor and the recipients of the text. The question of whether there ever was a historical person named Melchizedek will remain a mystery. What we can discern, however, is how the story and figure served the objectives of the redactor—objectives that may have included a validation of the king's priestly aspects and the prerogative of Jerusalem and its temple, but whose primary purpose was to emphasize the importance of the Abraham figure. The Melchizedek figure, as it appears in Gen 14, is an appearance of a king and priest, whose importance the redactor uses to emphasize the greater importance of Abraham.

2.2 Psalm 110

2.2.1 Introduction to Psalm 110

The second occurrence of the figure of Melchizedek in Hebrew Scripture is its brief mention in v. 4 of Psalm 110 (LXX 109). Here we again find the name combined with the associations of a priest, but with an enigmatic addition stating that the addressee is a *priest forever* (אַתָּה־כֹהֵן לְעוֹלָם).

Although this reference to Melchizedek is as epigrammatic as possible, the passage has been the subject of intense scrutiny, and a wide range of interpretations have been suggested. Unfortunately, both the Psalm and its use of the figure of Melchizedek remain mysterious, and before we can examine the specifics of Melchizedek in Psalm 110, it is necessary to discuss the text's provenance and purpose.

Psalm 110 is structured into two parts, each of which is begun by a divine oracle (vv. 1 and 4), which provides a plausible argument for an early unity behind its composition (this is further strengthened by the multiple repetitions found in both sections), but when it was composed remains a contested issue.[77] As with the Gen 14:18–20 passage, the discussion has yet to reach a consensus, and the suggestions range from the time of David to the Maccabean era. The argument for Maccabean times primarily depends on a supposed acrostic in which the initial letters of the first four verses spell out the name *Simon* (שִׁמְעוֹן).[78] This discovery led scholars to conclude that Psalm 110 was written (or, at least, heavily redacted) during Maccabean times, because the name was interpreted as referring to Simon Maccabeus (ca. 142–134 B.C.E.).[79] This hypothesis has since been rejected, primarily because the required initial letter (שׁ) occurs in 1b rather than 1a.[80]

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[77] Cf. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms III: 101–150. Introduction, Translation, and Notes with an Appendix, The Grammar of the Psalter*, The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries 17a (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1970), 119–120; Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 85; Some (e.g., Bernhard Duhm, *Die Psalmen erklärt von D. B. Duhm.* 2. verm. und verb. Aufl. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1922, 400) have argued that the song is the result of an amalgamation of several individual psalms, while others, e.g., Werner Schlisske, *Gottessöhne und Gottessohn im alten Testament: Phasen der Entmythisierung im alten Testament* (Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten (und Neuen) Testament 5:17; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1973), 99n.17, have argued that the Psalm contains a tripartite structure.

[78] The discovery of the acrostic in 1882 by Gustav Bickell is discussed in Duhm, *Psalmen*, 398–399.

[79] Cf., e.g., ibid., 398–400, where it is suggested that this Psalm was "Gottesspruch an Simon bei seiner Erwählung zum Fürsten und Hohenpriester" and "[d]aß Ps 110 1–4 sich auf Simon bezieht, beweist nicht bloß das Akrostichon, sondern mehr noch der Umstand, daß dies Gedicht auf niemand so gut paßt wie auf ihn"; This four-letter acrostic was later developed into a complete sentence (*Simon is terrible*), spanning the entire length of the Psalm by Marco Treves, "Two Acrostic Psalms", *VT* 15: 1 (1965): 86. The existence of such acrostics does have parallels in other Psalms; examples of more or less likely acrostics are found in Ps 25; 34; 37; 111; 119, and 145.

[80] E.g., Hermann Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 4th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1926), 485; Edward R. Hardy, "The Date of Psalm 110", *JBL* 64:3 (1945): 6; John Dancy, *A Commentary on I Maccabees* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1954), 34, who termed the evidence to be "extremely weak"; William O. E. Oesterley, *The Psalms: Translated with Text-critical and Exegetical Notes* (London: S.P.C.K., 1953), 485: "The contention

A range of alternative periods for the composition of the Psalm have been suggested instead: Schedl has suggested that it was written during the nationalistic movements of 630–609 B.C.E., Shapiro prefers the time of the High Priest Azariah, while Gunkel and Hardy both suggested early monarchic times, due to the close connection between the military and religious functions of the king.[81] Other scholars have interpreted the Psalm as describing specific events that occurred during the reign of David; for example, Caquot has linked it with David's enthronement, Rowley and Allen with the capture of Jerusalem, Podechard with the arrival of the Ark in Jerusalem, and Horton with the victory over Ammon.[82] Although none of these suggestions have gained any degree of scholarly consensus, what they all share is that Psalm 110 should be counted among the Royal Psalms, because of its apparent focus on the king.[83] Considering the Psalms' distinct royal focus, this is a reasonable supposition, as is a date of composition some time during the monarchic period. However, as the Psalm might just as likely be a late text reconstructing an idyllic "historic" past, we can conclude little with certainty regarding its date of composition.[84]

[. . .] can only be described as fantastic [. . .] these letters are not the initial ones of the lines in question, and can be made so only by arbitrary manipulation"; Though, as David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (ed. Robert A. Kraft and Leander Keck; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1973), 24–25, notes, although there are more aspects indicating an earlier date for the Psalm than a Hasmonean date, this does not necessarily mean that the Hasmoneans did not use it to "defend their claims to priestly and royal prerogatives".

[81] Hermann Gunkel, *Einleitung in die Psalmen die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels.* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1933), 169; Hardy, "Psalm 110", 385–390; Claus Schedl, "'Aus dem Bache am Wege': Textkritische Bemerkungen zu Ps 110 (109): 7", *ZAW* 73 (1961): 295–297; D. S. Shapiro, "Psalm 110", *Bet Miqra* 57 (1974): 289.

[82] T. H. Gaster, "Psalm 110", *Journal of the Manchester University Egyptian and Oriental Society*, 21 (1937): 43n1; Emmanuel Podechard, "Psaume 110", in *Études de critique et d'histoire religieuses* (Lyon: Facultés catholiques de Lyon, 1948), 17–23; Harold H. Rowley, "Melchizedek and Zadok (Gen. 14 and Ps. 110)", in *Festschrift für Alfred Bertholet* (ed. Walter Baumgarten, et al.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1950), 472; Helen Genevieve Jefferson, "Is Psalm 110 Canaanite?", *JBL* 73 (1954): 152–156; André Caquot, "Remarques sur le Psaume CX", *Semitica* 6 (1956): 51; Horton, *Melchizedek*, 34; Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 83–85.

[83] Cf. Granerød, *Abraham*, 191n.485, who lists the following psalms as the "irreducible minimum" of Psalms to be included in this category: 2, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132, and 144:1–11.

[84] Cf., e.g., Gaster, "Psalm 110", 37–44; and John Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, (Studies in Biblical Theology 32; London: SCM Press, 1976), 124.

2.2.2 Melchizedek in Psalm 110

The first of the Psalm's two divine oracles (v.1) consists of Yahweh inviting an unnamed king to sit at his right side; the second (v.4) involves an oath sworn by Yahweh promising his support and assistance to the king. The reference to a human being granted a position on Yahweh's right-hand side is unique in Hebrew Scripture (although similar traditions exist in Ancient Near Eastern sources), and serves to emphasize how the king has been granted the most honoured position possible.[85] The focus of the Psalm is thus on the union between God and this newly enthroned king. Yet this is an inequitable relationship: while Yahweh vanquishes the enemies, the king sits passively on his throne, secure in his coregency—serving merely as a representative of the true power behind the throne.

The reference to Melchizedek is found in the second oracle, and, as was the case in Gen 14:18–20, it is both a brief and abrupt reference:
Ps 110:4: נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה ׀ וְלֹא יִנָּחֵם אַתָּה־כֹהֵן לְעוֹלָם עַל־דִּבְרָתִי מַלְכִּי־צֶדֶק (*Yahweh has sworn and will not repent: "you are a priest forever according to the way of Melchizedek*"), LXX 109:4: ὤμοσεν κύριος καὶ οὐ μεταμεληθήσεται σὺ εἶ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδεκ (*The Lord has sworn and will not repent: "you are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek"*).
Both the MT and LXX versions are almost devoid of textual difficulties, which is noteworthy as the preceding and subsequent verses of Ps 110 contain several problematic sections.

The Psalm only contains a single mention of the name Melchizedek and provides no introduction to or explanation of the reference. This sudden reference to Melchizedek has led scholars to argue that it should not be regarded as a proper name but as a title referring to the recipient of the Psalm as, for example, *a righteous king*,[86] *reigning in justice*,[87] or *making justice reign*.[88] It has also been suggested that we should interpret the Psalm with Melchizedek in apposition, whereby Melchizedek is the one

[85] Cf. Hay, *Glory*, 52–55. We do find examples within Hebrew Scripture of people invited to sit on the right-hand side of kings (e.g., 1 Kgs 2:19), and Yahweh's right hand often symbolizes his power (e.g., Exod 15:6; Ps 74:11). Later traditions include a number of figures granted the honour of sitting on the right hand of God (cf. Sirach 12:12; Wisdom of Solomon 9:4; 18:15; and numerous places in the New Testament); cf. ibid., 55–56.
[86] Gaster, "Psalm 110", 41.
[87] Karl-Heinz Bernhardt, *Das Problem der altorientalischen Königsideologie im alten Testament, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Geschichte der Psalmenexegese dargestellt und kritisch gewürdigt* (VTSup 8; Leiden: Brill, 1961), 235n.3.
[88] Del Medico, "Melchisédech", 167.

speaking (*according to my, Melchizedek's, order*), or with Melchizedek as a vocative (*according to my order, O Melchizedek*!), implying that the Psalm was addressed to a historical figure named Melchizedek.[89] While the Psalm may have been understood as directed to a "historic" Melchizedek from an early period of time,[90] the Psalm's primary purpose was to emphasize how the king addressed was guaranteed to hold a priestly office based on the *order of Melchizedek*, whereby both sacral and royal offices (both functional and ontological) were combined in the king, in accordance with Yahweh's will.[91] This reading is supported by the text, although the key part of the verse remains problematic. The *hapax legomenon* עַל־דִּבְרָתִי (a few texts provide עַל־דִּבְרַת instead) presents a significant obstacle, and its translation impacts the understanding of the entire oath.[92] It has been suggested that the Hebrew phrase should be translated as a pronominal suffix: *A Melchizedek according to my promise*,[93] or *sworn according to Melchizedek*.[94] In the LXX versions, the section is less troublesome (although κατὰ τὴν τάξιν also constitutes something of a *hapax legomenon*, its only parallel being in the later *Life of Adam and Eve* 38.2 where the angels are ordered to convene according to their respective rank), as the prepositional phrase conveys the mode of the priesthood granted to the subject. This is communicated by κατὰ and its following noun in the accusative, expressing similarity or example, and by τάξις typically

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[89] Cf. David Flusser, "Melchizedek and the Son of Man", *Christian News from Israel* (1966): 26–27; Milik, "Milkî-sedek", 125; James Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as it Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 279; Anders Aschim, "Melchizedek and Jesus: 11QMelchizedek and the Epistle to the Hebrews", in *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus* (JSJSup; ed. Carey C. Newman, James R. Davila, and Gladys S. Lewis; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 136–137.

[90] As suggested by Flusser, "Melchizedek", 26–27; and James C. VanderKam, "Sabbatical Chronologies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature", in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context* (ed. Timothy Lim et al.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 173–176.

[91] Cf. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 81; Mason, "*Priest Forever*", 144; Others have argued that the Psalm refers not to an ideal future king, but to the awaited Messiah; cf. Charles A. Gieschen, "Enoch and Melchizedek: The Concern for Supra-Human Priestly Mediators in 2 Enoch", in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only* (SJS 4; ed. Andrei A. Orlov, Gabriele Boccaccini, and Jason Zurawski; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 376: "Here the union of king and priest in Melchizedek becomes the model for the Davidic Messiah".

[92] Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 78–87.

[93] Stefan Schreiner, "Psalm CX und die Investitur des Hohenpriesters", *VT* 27: 2 (1977): 217.

[94] Caquot, "Remarques", 44.

carrying the meaning of a fixed succession or an arrangement of elements in sequence.[95]

Granerød suggests that 110:4 did not originally contain a personal name, but rather a nominal phrase or clause that was later personified (perhaps under the influence of Gen 14:18–20, where it, according to Granerød, was a personal name). This results in a reading that caused later traditions to prefer a modal meaning, interpreting it as describing the manner of the priesthood accorded to the king and to see in it a personal name. Although Granerød's hypothesis is possible, there is a lack of traditions supporting it. We will thus follow what Granerød terms the "common view" and translate as *according to the order of Melchizedek*, primarily on the basis of this reading's early attestation in LXX, and how later traditions have primarily understood 110:4 as including a personal name and a modal meaning. This translation emphasizes the modal interpretation and hints at the implied undertones of a succession within v. 4.[96]

2.2.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in Psalm 110

In our analysis of the brief reference to the Melchizedek figure in Ps 110:4, we found a Royal Psalm focused on describing an ideal relationship between Yahweh and his chosen king. The Melchizedek figure appears isolated from the elements ascribed it in the Genesis passage: neither Abraham, blessings, gifts, nor tithe are mentioned. The sole elements shared by the two texts are the name and the combination of priest and king (in both cases, presumably, connected to Jerusalem). The absence of the narrative elements makes it impossible to determine whether the Psalm drew on the Genesis narrative, or whether it constitutes a separate use of the figure and of the traditions associated with it.

The figure appears to have been included in the Psalm because of Melchizedek's association with Jerusalem and his importance as the first priest mentioned in Hebrew Scripture, but in particular due to the combination of the offices of king and priest in Melchizedek. These elements provided the author with a Scriptural precedence for the combination of these two offices, confirming the priestly prerogative of the monarchy and Jerusalem as its city. Although the eternal element attached to the priesthood (110:4) would develop into a primary concern of later interpretations, the Psalm's text displays a distinct lack of focus on this

[95] Granerød, *Abraham*, 209.
[96] Following the conclusions of Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 81.

aspect. Instead, we find a king (whether a historic king, an ideal king, or the royal Messiah) whose sacral duties would last "forever"—presumably a figurative way of expressing the related Near Eastern concept of kings being priests forever in their reign.

This king is described, through the Melchizedek material, as a divinely appointed priest whose reign is guaranteed by Yahweh. The Psalm does not focus on Melchizedek or on the specifics of his priesthood; instead, it employs the name and tradition to emphasize the function and position of the king in regards to his god. That the figure was used in this manner reveals that the "historical" Melchizedek was found sufficiently important to support the priest-king combination. As the use of Melchizedek in Genesis extolled the patriarch, Melchizedek is primarily employed in Psalm 110 to extol the unnamed king.

CHAPTER 3. TURN-OF-THE-ERA INTERPRETATIONS OF MELCHICHEDEK

3.1 *Greek Fragment on the Life of Abraham*

3.1.1 Introduction to the *Greek Fragment on the Life of Abraham*

The *Greek Fragment on the Life of Abraham*, found in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica* (9.17), contains one of the earliest examples of a rewriting of Genesis in Greek, and an early example of assimilation of the patriarchs to divinities of Babylonian and Hellenistic origin.[97] It also constitutes the first (surviving) text outside of Hebrew Scripture to refer to the figure of Melchizedek. Again, however, the primary focus of the fragment is not on Melchizedek: following the Genesis *Vorlage*, the author's primary purpose is to present Abraham as the Jewish hero *par excellence* and as the patriarch of all humankind.

The short fragment begins with a description of how the lucky few giants who escaped the flood built the Tower of Babel, of its destruction by God, and of the subsequent scattering of the giants. The stage set, the fragment's narrative turns to Abraham and his origins: he was a tenth-generation (or thirteenth-generation) descendent of the giants,[98] born in *the Babylonian city of Camarine* (πόλει τῆς Βαβυλωνίας Καμαρίνῃ, further explained as *the*

[97] E.g., of Noah and Enoch, who are identified with the Babylonian Belus and the Greek Atlas, respectively. The assimilation appears to have used material from Hesiod and Berossus to provide Abraham with a central role in regards to the beginning of human civilization; cf. Ben Zion Wacholder, "Pseudo-Eupolemus' Two Greek Fragments on the Life of Abraham", *HUCA* 34 (1963): 87; Ben Zion Wacholder, *Eupolemus: A Study of Judeo-Greek Literature* (Monographs of the Hebrew Union College 3; Cincinnati, Ohio: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1974), 288.

[98] Genesis 11:10–32 describes Abraham as the tenth generation from Noah. The notion of Abraham being of the thirteenth generation has been suggested by Jacob Freudenthal, *Alexander Polyhistor und die von ihm erhaltenen Reste judäischer und samaritanischer Geschichtswerke: Abhandlung, Anmerkungen und griechischer Text* (Breslau: Druck Grass Barth (W. Friedrich), 1875), 94–95, to be based on the identification (from Belus) of Abraham with Nimrod, who lived thirteen generations after Adam.

city of Ourie (*that denotes the city of the Chaldeans)*: πόλιν Οὐρίην (εἶναι δὲ μεθερμηνευομένην Χαλδαίων πόλιν)),[99] and outstanding in piety, nobility, wisdom, and of the *Chaldean craft* (Χαλδαϊκὴν εὑρεῖν).[100] Because of Abraham's noble character, God commands the patriarch to go to Phoenicia to teach his craft to its residents. After this, elements from Gen 12 and 14 are rewritten into a story in which Armenians capture Abraham's nephew, causing Abraham to declare war against them. Triumphant, Abraham is then entertained as a guest ὑπὸ πόλεως ἱερὸν Ἀργαριζίν (*by the city at the temple Argarizin*),[101] receiving gifts from the priest and king of that city, Melchizedek. Through an extensive rewriting of the Genesis *Vorlage*, the author has produced a detailed amalgamation of Gen 12 and 14, in which the original geography has been changed: Shechem and Canaan have become Argarizin and Phoenicia, respectively.[102] The narrative begins when Abraham arrives in Phoenicia (Gen 12), continues with his war against the Armenians (Gen 14), his arrival at Argarizin (Gen 12), and his short meeting with Melchizedek (Gen 14), and finishes with Abraham departing to teach his craft to the Egyptian priests at Heliopolis (Gen 12).

The relocation of the meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek to Argarizin is the primary reason for the general scholarly consensus that this particular

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[99] Neither of these two designations appear in the LXX, and no Babylonian source mentions a city called Camarine. According to Strabo (*Geography* 6.2.1, 5), there was a Kamarina in the southern part of Sicily, although this city has not been associated with Ur or Ourie; Cf. James E. Bowley, "Ur of the Chaldees in Pseudo-Eupolemus", *JSP* 7:14 (1996): 56, 61–63; Holladay, *Fragments*, 179, saw this as a connection to the Samaritan self-designation of "Shamerim". Greek text from Karl Mras, *Eusebius Werke, achter Band: Die praeparatio evangelica* (Reihenfolge des Erscheinens der griechischen christlichen Schriftstellar 43; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1954), 502–504; and Carl R. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors* (SBLTT 20; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars' Press, 1983), 170–175.

[100] Freudenthal, *Alexander Polyhistor*, 207, suggests that the "Chaldean Craft" was "Astrologie", but also included "die Theologie; die Mathematik", and perhaps "Wahrsagerkunst" or "Magier". Cf. Holladay, *Fragments*, 180.

[101] Although the expression is elsewhere translated as an adjective (i.e., *Holy Argarizin*, cf. ibid., 173), in this case it seems plausible that it should be translated as a noun. The temple Argarizin may derive from a "metonymic shift in meaning from the name of the mountain to the name of the temple upon the mountain", according to Magnar Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans* (VTSup 128; ed. H. M. Barstad et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 245, 252, who suggests the reason for this change was that Melchizedek "was a priest and needed a temple" (ibid.).

[102] Josephus provides an interesting parallel in *B.J.* 1.63, where he equates Shechem with Argarizin; cf. ibid., 244–245. Josephus does not mention this identification in his two references to Melchizedek, where he makes it quite clear that Melchizedek's city was Jerusalem (see Ch. 3.12).

fragment should be considered the work of a Samaritan author. In opposition to this consensus, we argue in the following that the Samaritan traits are not as pronounced as has been sometimes argued, and that the fragment instead appears to be the product of a non-Samaritan author. There are two main arguments that support this reasoning: the first is the lack of any similar traditions in the Samaritan Pentateuch (as previously discussed) and in the later Samaritan Targum that would either concern the Melchizedek figure or relocate the meeting to Argarizin.[103] The second reason concerns what has normally been seen as evidence of a Samaritan origin, and necessitates an extended discussion of the origin of the fragment.

The fragment is known only from Eusebius, who provides his readers with two quotations, constituting two-thirds of the ninth chapter in his *Praeparatio Evangelica* (9.17.2–9 and 9.18.2). Both quotations are extracts from Alexander Polyhistor's *On the Jews*.[104] Among the twenty-eight excerpts of Alexander Polyhistor preserved by Eusebius, a majority, including these two fragments, are attributed to the author Eupolemus.[105] Who this Eupolemus was is debated; an author of this name is mentioned only four times in Jewish texts.[106] Most scholars have argued that these

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[103] Cf. Martin McNamara, "Melchizedek: Gen 14,17–20 in the Targums, in Rabbinic and Early Christian Literature", *Biblica* 81 (2000): 9–10.

[104] Dated to ca. 60 B.C.E. by Felix Jacoby, Jan Bollansée, and Pierre Bonnechere, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker IIIa* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1954), 256; a date tentatively supported by Wacholder, *Eupolemus*, 51; According to Mras, the fragments should be regarded as reliable representations of Alexander Polyhistor's writings. Mras concludes after examining Eusebius' quotations from Plato that these are also frequently more reliable than the surviving manuscripts, Karl Mras, "Ein Vorwort zur neuen Eusebiusausgabe (mit Ausblicken auf die spätere Gräcität)", *Rheinisches Museum N.F.* 92 (1944): 217–236; Wacholder, *Eupolemus*, 48, agrees: "both Alexander Polyhistor and his copyist Eusebius quoted their sources verbatim, paraphrasing very infrequently". After comparing the critical editions of Josephus' manuscripts with the quotes surviving in Eusebius, Wacholder concludes that "Such a comparison shows that the literary remains of Eusebius have more faithfully preserved the original of Josephus than did the manuscripts of Josephus themselves". As for how reliable Alexander Polyhistor's treatment of his sources was, Wacholder states that, although it is impossible to conclusively demonstrate, it seems likely that Alexander Polyhistor is trustworthy, as he "displays no such creedal or nationalist bias".

[105] The fragments have been dated to the 2nd century B.C.E., with 292–293 B.C.E. as *terminus a quo* and *terminus ante quem* in the middle 1st century B.C.E., as suggested by Holladay, *Fragments*, 178; Kartveit, *Origin*, 159–160, dates the first fragment to the first half of the 2nd century B.C.E., while Robert Doran, "Pseudo-Eupolemus. A New Translation and Introduction", in *OTP* 2 (ed. James H. Charlesworth; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985), 873–876, dates the work to ca. 158 B.C.E.

[106] The name appears in 1 Maccabees 8:17 and 2 Maccabees 4:11 (and in the paraphrase of these in Josephus *A.J.* 12.415), where an "Eupolemus, the son of John, son of Akkus", is part of the delegation sent by Judah Maccabee to Rome in ca. 161 B.C.E. The second

refer to a single author named Eupolemus,[107] while others have suggested a distinction between "Eupolemus, the Jewish diplomat" and "Eupolemus, the pagan historian".[108] The argument for a single author named Eupolemus relies primarily on the statement by Josephus that Eupolemus was a Greek historian (*C. Ap.* 1.218), on the perceived tendency within the fragments to rewrite Scripture on the basis of a "syncretistic" program, and on internal textual indications.[109] Wacholder instead made the case that Eupolemus was not a Jew by focusing on the comment of Josephus' that the errors in Eupolemus' writings were caused by the author's problems reading the Hebrew text ([he] *could not follow our writings quite accurately*).[110] Since then, Freudenthal has shown that the "syncretistic program" primarily appears in Fragment 1. According to Freudenthal, this fragment should thus not be attributed to Eupolemus, but instead to "ein ungenannter samaritanischer Geschichtschreiber". This Pseudo-Eupolemus, responsible for two of the seven fragments originally attributed to Eupolemus,[111] was

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Eupolemus is mentioned in a list of non-Jewish historians who, according to Josephus are erroneous in their treatment of Jewish history (*C. Ap.* 1.218). An Eupolemus is also mentioned in writings of Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata* 1.153, 4) and by Eusebius of Caesarea (*Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.13, 7); cf. Wacholder, *Eupolemus*, 1.

[107] The hypothesis of a single Eupolemus was originally proposed by Vossius in 1687; cf. Freudenthal, *Alexander Polyhistor*, 82–103; 207–218, who supported the hypothesis, as have Wacholder, *Eupolemus*, 1–3; and Karl Kuhlmey, *Eupolemi fragmenta prolegomenis et commentario instructa* (Berolinum, 1840), 10–26, who notes that this position was originally suggested by Humphrey Hody in *Histoire critique*, 1711. For a detailed discussion of the problem, see Wacholder, *Eupolemus*, 1–4 and Harold W. Attridge, "Jewish Historiography", in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters* (SBLBMI; ed. R. A. Kraft and G. W. E. Nickelsburg; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars' Press, 1986), 311–314.

[108] Cf., e.g., Kuhlmey, *Eupolemi*, 20–26.

[109] E.g., the statement that David was Saul's son is an error that a diplomat chosen by Judah Maccabee would not be likely to make; cf. ibid., 10–12; Wacholder, *Eupolemus*, 2.

[110] Wacholder, *Eupolemus*, 3, finds further evidence in the rarity of the name; in the chronology whereby the date of the Maccabean embassy of ca. 161 B.C.E. corresponds to the date attributed in the historian's writings to the reign of Demetrius I Soter (162–150 B.C.E.); and in the author's familiarity with the architecture of the Temple and support for the religious and political traditions of Jerusalem. These elements show conclusively, that, "contrary to Kuhlmey, Eupolemus was a Jew" (ibid., 21).

[111] The two fragments have traditionally been attributed to the same author due to the number of related ideas in them (e.g., the giants and their connection to Babylon). Fragment 2 may well stem from a similar tradition, but whether or not it is the work of the same author is difficult to identify; cf. Nikolaus Walter, "Pseudo-Eupolemus (Samaritanischer Anonymus)", in *Fragmente jüdisch-hellenistischer Historiker* (*Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit, Bd. I, Historische und Legendarische Erzählungen, 2*, ed. Nikolaus Walter, Werner G. Kümmel, and Christian Habicht; (Gütersloh, Germany: G. Mohn, 1976), 137–143; Wacholder, *Eupolemus*, 3;

described by Freudenthal as a Samaritan, because he considered the fragment to corresponded well with the supposed Samaritan character (described as a mix of different peoples and religions), and the preference for the name Gerizim (and the translation). Most scholars since have agreed with this Samaritan hypothesis.[112]

Yet the question of whether or not the fragment should be identified as a Samaritan text has not yet been settled, as shown by the recent work on the subject by Kartveit.[113] As he notes, the Samaritan identification primarily relies on later, often polemical, accounts of Samaritan traditions and their character, especially ascribing them a syncretistic tendency.[114] The concept of Samaritans as particularly "syncretistic", compared to their neighbours, has since been proven inaccurate.[115] The remaining arguments denoting a Samaritan origin (such as the use of Argarizin, and the use of LXX)[116] are also not conclusive: Kartveit has demonstrated that the name Argarizin was in early use by both Samaritans and non-Samaritans.[117] The textual dependency on LXX is also questionable evidence; whereas Holladay saw this dependency as proof of a non-Samaritan text, Freudenthal saw this as an indication that the Samaritans not only knew of, but also employed LXX.[118] Two additional arguments favouring a non-Samaritan origin are

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287, who found the author to be a Jewish "Jerusalemite, a patriot who was barely influenced by heathen thought" and "extremely loyal to the temple of Jerusalem".

[112] Cf., e.g., Freudenthal, *Alexander Polyhistor*, 96: "Das Alles stimmt schlecht zur Bibel, passt aber sehr gut zu seiner samaritanischen Abkunft"; Wacholder, *Eupolemus*, 3: a "Samaritan author, now referred to as Pseudo-Eupolemus, [who was] a syncretist". Wacholder further states (ibid., 287) that the fragment exhibits an identifiable Samaritan exegesis characterized by a "conscious and free fusion of Jewish and Pagan myths", and a "pro-Phoenician and anti-Egyptian stance", matching the assumed Samaritan political situation of the time. Wacholder proposed that the fragment was written in Samaria and, because of the mention of Melchizedek, by a member of the Samaritan priesthood attempting to trace the priesthood back to Melchizedek (ibid., 289); Cf. James R. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other?* (JSJSup; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 105.

[113] Kartveit, *Origin*, 243–257.

[114] E.g., Josephus who (*A.J.* 11.343) describes the Samaritan people and their authors as having syncretistic tendencies and influenced by Babylonian thoughts and traditions; cf. ibid., 247.

[115] Cf. Hengel, "The Samaritans were no less 'monotheistic' than the Jews". Hengel, "Judaism", 15. Cf. Kartveit, *Origin*, 247, who also criticizes this notion on the grounds that there is a lack of any "trace of other deities than YHWH in the Mount Gerizim inscriptions contemporaneous with Pseudo-Eupolemus".

[116] Cf. Holladay, "*Eupolemus*, *Pseudo-*", ABD, vol. 2, p. 672–673.

[117] Kartveit, *Origin*, 248; 251.

[118] Freudenthal, *Alexander Polyhistor*, 98: "Wichtiger als diese Uebereinstimmung ist es, dass durch Pseudo-Eupolmos ein unverwerflicher Beleg für die Benutzung der LXX durch Samaritaner geliefert wird". Cf. Holladay, *Fragments*, 161n.4–6. Kartveit, *Origin*, 248–249, on the other hand, find this unlikely, as there are no other known Samaritan

the Haggadic material used by the fragment and its explicit focus on exalting the patriarch Abraham.[119] This makes it more plausible that the fragment was written by a Jewish author with ties to the Hellenistic milieu, who used a mixture of Haggadic traditions combined with Babylonian and Greek mythological material.

3.1.2 Melchizedek in the *Greek Fragment on the Life of Abraham*

Apart from its main purpose of exalting the patriarch Abraham, the fragment also provides a few interesting details regarding the figure of Melchizedek: in 9:17.5b–6, the fragment reads *He* [Abraham] *was also received as a guest by the city Holy Argarizin, which translates as "The Mountain of the Most High". He also received gifts from Melchizedek who was a priest of God and reigned as a king as well* (ξενισθῆναί τε αὐτὸν ὑπὸ πόλεως ἱερὸν Ἀργαριζίν, ὃ εἶναι μεθερμηνευόμενον ὄρος ὑψίστου· παρὰ δὲ τοῦ Μελχισεδὲκ ἱερέως ὄντος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ βασιλεύοντος λαβεῖν δῶρα).[120] The name Ἀργαριζίν, and its explanation ὃ εἶναι μεθερμηνευόμενον ὄρος, may be a later insertion into a text that originally read *He was also received as a guest by the city of the Most High. He also received gifts from Melchizedek who was a priest of God and reigned as a king as well.*[121] This reconstruction provides a reading much closer to the Genesis *Vorlage*, and one that flows better than the fragment's current text. If we follow Kartveit's reconstruction, the fragment presents Melchizedek as a priest in the city of the Most High—a priest serving the Most High God (Gen 14:18)—and a narrative in which Abraham, while staying in the Phoenician area, meets with the priest-king Melchizedek, who reigned in a city, presumably Jerusalem.[122]

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uses of the LXX whereby "Pseudo-Eupolemus would have to carry the weight of this supposition alone". Although he does not dispute that the Samaritans used Greek in a later period in their Samareitikon and vernacular.

[119] Cf. Holladay, *Fragments*, 161n. 4–6; Kartveit, *Origin*, 248–249.

[120] English translation from ibid., 243.

[121] Ibid., 246. Kartveit's explanation for the fragment's current somewhat jumbled text is that "the addition may have been a gloss explaining that this city [Jerusalem] was the holy 'Argarizin', a name in need of translation. This gloss eventually was included with the running text; a process which is well known from the HB".

[122] Ibid.

The insertion of Ἀργαριζίν may originate with LXX Gen 33:18a *and Jacob came to Salem, the city of the Shechemites* (καὶ ἦλθεν Ιακωβ εἰς Σαλημ πόλιν Σικιμων), with the identification of Salem with Shechem/Gerizim presenting an ideal location to further exalt Abraham.[123] Kartveit's argument, and the lack of any Samaritan familiarity with this tradition, presents a plausible case for the relocation to Argarizin being the result of a midrash on Gen 14 and 33, rather than a unique and otherwise unknown (Samaritan) tradition.[124] We may thus find the hypothesis suggested by Kartveit more plausible than the current consensus that this text constitutes a Samaritan aetiological narrative describing the legendary foundation of the Samaritan temple and a tradition detailing the Samaritan view on Melchizedek that did not surface in the Samaritan Pentateuch or Targumim.[125] The focus on extolling Abraham and the use of LXX provides a plausible argument for the Fragment being the work of a Palestinian Jew. That the phrase *Argarizin*, and its contracted Samaritan form, did not carry negative connotations, but was used neutrally in both Roman and non-Samaritan texts, strengthens this possibility.[126]

Returning to the fragment's description of the meeting, while Melchizedek remains both a king and a priest (preserving the main characteristics of the priest-king combination found in both Gen 14 and Ps 110), his God is described without the appellation of τοῦ ὑψίστου (although as discussed, this may be due to later editorial changes). The exchange of

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[123] It is possible that the author responsible for the gloss in Pseudo-Eupolemus followed and expanded this reading of the LXX by relocating the meeting between the patriarch and Melchizedek to Mount Gerizim—an important location situated close to Shechem (a location with which Abraham was already associated, according to Gen 12:6). This relocation could either have been the independent work of the author, or it could be based on the associations of the great trees of Moreh, located at Gerizim in Deut 11:29–30 and at Shechem in Gen 12:6; cf. ibid., 250, who finds that the "LXX is sufficient as an explanation for the occurrence of Mount Gerizim in the final text of Pseudo-Eupolemus".

[124] Ibid., 355; A similar idea is found only in a few texts from the late 4th century C.E., e.g., *Peregrinatio ad Loca Sancta* by Aetheria; cf. McNamara, "Melchizedek", 9–10.

[125] For examples favouring a Samaritan origin, see Wacholder, "Pseudo-Eupolemus' Two Greek Fragments on the Life of Abraham", 112–113; Martin Hengel, *Judentum*, 59n.240; James H. Charlesworth, *The Pseudepigrapha and Modern Research* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars' Press, 1976), 77–78; Emil Schürer, "The Graeco-Jewish Literature", in *The Literature of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus* (ed. Nahum N. Glatzer; New York: Schoken Books, 1972), 211; Holladay, *Fragments*, 157–159; Gianotto, *Melchisedek*, 51–58; Attridge, "Jewish Historiography", 312–313; Balla, *Melchizedekian*, 24; Bowley, "Ur", 55.

[126] Cf. Kartveit, *Origin*, 254; Hengel, *Judentum*, 167: "die uns erhaltenen Fragmente bis auf den einen Satz über das Heiligtum auf dem Garizim ebensogout von einem hellenistisch gebildeten Juden stammen könnten".

gifts between Melchizedek and Abraham has also undergone significant abbreviation. The three elements from Gen 14:18–20 (the initial gift of wine and bread, the two blessings, and the tithe) have apparently been reduced to the simple statement that Abraham *received gifts* (λαβεῖν δῶρα). The author's use of δῶρα indicates that it is the bread and wine that were reduced to gifts (as δῶρον is not used in LXX in connection with the Hebrew מַעֲשֵׂר (*tithe*), but instead renders gifts in both cultic and noncultic settings in Hebrew Scripture).[127] The blessings and the tithe may have been excluded from the fragment's reworked account of the meeting, because they might have conveyed that Melchizedek was, at least in some respects, Abraham's equal or superior.

3.1.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in the *Fragment on the Life of Abraham*

In our analysis of the *Greek Fragment on the Life of Abraham*, we found the brief text to be an early pro-Jerusalem text and the work of a Hellenized Jew who rewrote the Genesis narrative primarily to extol the figure of Abraham. The extolling of Abraham as the archetypical Jewish hero, and the emphasis on his superiority over even the holiest of Samaritan sites, might mark the text as *anti*-Samaritan rather than Samaritan, and the fragment seems a more likely exponent of contemporary Judaism than it does the only surviving evidence of a unique and otherwise unknown Samaritan tradition.

Again, the mention of Melchizedek is a minor thing, and apart from the functions of Melchizedek and his gifts, the Fragment appears uninterested in the figure itself; he is useful only in as much as he increases the importance of Abraham. Melchizedek is presented as a human priest-king, albeit one important enough to be mentioned in the short retelling of Abraham's vitae. As such, the text seems to corroborate the hypothesis of an early Melchizedek being an important figure from tradition, whose meeting with Abraham was sufficiently noteworthy to validate his mention in this retelling of the Abraham story, especially given the brevity of the fragment.

Compared to some of the surprising expansions in the rest of the Fragment, the Melchizedek passage constitutes an abbreviated rewriting of the text. The changes illustrate well the purpose of the meeting in the

[127] Cf. Doran, "Pseudo-Eupolemus", 880n.o; Mason, *"Priest Forever",* 152–153.

fragment: to extol the figure of Abraham. Indeed, all descriptive elements of Melchizedek from Genesis have been reduced, leaving only those that might serve this specific purpose. The emphasis of the story is entirely on how the king (and, presumably, priest) of an important place gave gifts to Abraham.

3.2 Book of *Jubilees*

3.2.1 Introduction to *Jubilees*

The *Book of Jubilees* contains a rewriting of material from Genesis and the first half of Exodus (Exo 24), allegedly dictated to Moses by an angel at the top of Mt. Sinai.[128] The text, originally written in Hebrew, was later translated into Greek, Syriac, Latin, and Ge'ez, and the fragments found at Qumran attest a *Vorlage* datable to ca. 170–150 B.C.E.[129] The number of

[128] See James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (ed. Michael A. Knib; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 11–21, for an introduction to *Jubilees*.

[129] 4Q216[a], the oldest of the fragments, has been palaeographically dated to the middle or late 1st century B.C.E.; cf. Józef T. Milik and James VanderKam, "Jubilees", in *Qumran Cave 4: VIII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 1* (DJD XIII; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 2; According to Robert H. Charles, "The Book of Jubilees", in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (ed. Robert H. Charles, vol. 2; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1913), lvii–lxvi; and Gene L. Davenport, *The Eschatology of the Book of Jubilees* (StPB 20; Leiden: Brill, 1971), 10–18, both external and internal evidence suggests that Jubilees was written in the middle of the 2nd century B.C.E. Examples of more specific dates include James C. VanderKam, *Textual and Historical Studies in the Book of Jubilees* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 14; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars' Press, 1977), 283–285, who suggests 161–140 B.C.E.; and 170–150 in VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*; a date supported by Daniel A. Machiela, *The Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon: A New Text Edition and Translation with Introduction and Special Treatment of Columns 13–17* (*STDJ* 79; ed. Florentino García Martínez; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 15–16; Harold H. Rowley, *The Relevance of Apocalyptic: A Study of Jewish and Christian Apocalypses from Daniel to the Revelation* (Lutterworth Press, 1963), 65, state that the work "in all probability [. . .] points to a Maccabaean date". Louis Finkelstein, "Pre-Maccabean Documents in the Passover Haggadah", *HTR* 36 (1943): 1–38; and George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism* (HTS 26; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), 46–47, have both suggested a specific year, 168 B.C.E., based on events that preceded the Maccabean Revolt. On the other hand, Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 86, argues that *Jubilees* was "undoubtedly" written after the Maccabean crisis.

fragments discovered at Qumran (the oldest known sources to *Jubilees*), attest to its importance in the community. Yet judging primarily on the basis of its literary style, *Jubilees* was not the work of the Qumran society, but the product of different community.[130]

3.2.2 Melchizedek in *Jubilees*

Unfortunately for the study of the Melchizedek figure, the section of *Jubilees* in which the Melchizedek episode would be expected to appear has not been found among any of the Qumran fragments. Even more unfortunately, all later translations of the passage in question (13:25–27) are defective in the central part of the narrative. What remains are elements from the beginning of Abraham's campaign from Genesis (*When he had armed his household servants* [. . .) and the concluding part of the story: . . .] *for Abram and his descendants the tithe of the first fruits for the Lord. The Lord made it an eternal ordinance that they should give it to the priests who served before him for them to possess it forever.*[131]

The surviving text presents a strong focus on the divine origin and description of a tithe, functioning as eternal financial support for the priesthood. That the original text ascribed the origin of the tithe to the

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[130] Cf. James C. VanderKam, "The Jubilees Fragments from Qumran Cave 4", in *The Madrid Qumran Congress: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Madrid 18–21 March, 1991* (ed. Julio Trebolle Barrera and Luis Vegas Montaner; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 648; Mason, "Melchizedek Traditions", 346; Boccaccini, *Beyond*, 86–87, who argues that *Jubilees* was the work of the "priestly party that produced the books of Enoch"; A total of fourteen or fifteen manuscripts from five different caves (1, 2, 3, 4, and 11) have been identified. This makes *Jubilees* one of the most frequently found manuscripts, and with a large spread in the caves, too, indicating its influence on the community; cf. Charlotte Hempel, "The Place of the Book of Jubilees at Qumran and Beyond", in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context* (ed. Timothy H. Lim et al.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 187–188; 191–193; and VanderKam, "Jubilees Fragments", 648, who describes *Jubilees* as "one of the most authoritative or 'biblical' texts at Qumran"; *Jubilees* may well have been regarded as being as authoritative in status as the Pentateuch by the Qumran and other contemporary groups (or perhaps even more authoritative, according to Ben Zion Wacholder, "Jubilees as the Super-Canon: Torah-Admonition Versus Torah-Commandment", in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Cambridge 1995. Published in Honour of Joseph M. Baumgarten* [ed. Moshe J. Bernstein, Florentino Garciá Martínez, and John Kampen; Leiden: Brill, 1997], 210).

[131] Translation from James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text* (CSCO 510, Scriptores Aethiopici Tomus 87; Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 82, and James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (CSCO 511, Scriptores Aethiopici Tomus 88; Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 80–82.

transaction mentioned in Gen 14:20 seems certain, based on the context. However, for unknown reasons, the entire Melchizedek episode is missing from the text. This absence of any reference to the priest-king Melchizedek may be intentional—presumably to lessen the interest, or impact, of the problematic Melchizedek.[132] Such a deletion would correspond well with the general focus of *Jubilees* on presenting the house of Levi in as favourable a light as possible.[133] Lacking Melchizedek, the text of *Jubilees* avoids reminding its readers of the existence of a rival priesthood that might otherwise obfuscate the origin of the tithe and the status of the Levitical priesthood as its recipient. This deletion would produce a text that focuses on extolling the Levitical priesthood.

If the lacuna was not caused by "theological expurgation", it may have been the result of scribal error, as proposed by VanderKam.[134] Presumably, this would be an error that already occurred in the early versions, before the original text was translated into Ge'ez. Some of the Ethiopic manuscripts contain details of the meeting in their marginal notes, on the basis of which VanderKam suggests the following, tentative, reconstruction of the Melchizedek episode: *When he had armed his household servants, Abram went and killed Chedorlaomer. Upon returning, he took a tithe of everything and gave it to Melchizedek. This tithe was for Abram and his descendants the tithe of the first fruits for the Lord.*[135] This reconstruction contains neither mention of the location of the meeting, nor specifics about Melchizedek, nor the blessings from the Genesis narrative. As such, it would constitute a much abbreviated rewriting, in which most of the

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[132] Cf. Longenecker, "Melchizedek", 164–165, who states that it "seems too much to believe that it [i.e., the origin of the lacuna] occurred only through 'technical inadvertence', as some have rather lightly proposed. Evidently the copyist was so opposed to something in the original text itself or to some contemporary usage of the text that he could not bring himself even to copy out the line that spoke of Abraham's meeting with Melchizedek". Similarly, Eugene Tisserant, "Fragments syriaques du livre des Jubilés", *RB* 30 (1921): 215; André Caquot, "Le livre des Jubilés, Melkisedeq et les Dîmes", *JJS* 33 (1982): 261–264; and Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible*, 293.

[133] Cf., e.g., Rowley, *Apocalyptic*, 66.

[134] VanderKam, *A Critical Text*, 82; VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 81–82.

[135] VanderKam, *A Critical Text*, 82. The surviving parts of the sentence within 13:25 reads as follows:

ወአስተረሰየ ፡ ልደ ፡ ቤቱ ፡ [lacuna]

ዲበ ፡ አብራም ፡ ወዲበ ፡ ዘርኡ ፡ ዓሥራተ ፡ ቀዳሚ ፡ ስእግዚአብሔር ።

The marginal notes are as follows:

MS 38: *He went to war, and when he returned he tithed to Melchizedek.*

MS 40: *Abram went and killed Chedorlaomer, and when he returned he took a tithe from everything and gave it to Melchizedek. And this tithe . . .*

MS 45: *He went and killed Chedorlaomer, and when he returned he tithed to Melchizedek.*

MS 50: *Melchizedek offered bread and wine as a libation, and he blessed . . .*

elements of the Melchizedek narrative that could trouble the Levitical priesthood have been removed. VanderKam's reconstructed text indicates that the original account of the meeting may have been even more succinct than in Gen 14:18–20, and Pseudo-Eupolemus' account of the meeting. It would also have shared the same focus of extolling the patriarch Abraham.

It is in the nature of reflections such as these that it is difficult to prove anything, yet it remains possible that the lacuna is the result of a conscious editorial deletion. As Longenecker has argued, the "culprit" may have been a "quietistic Jew with a priestly background" who "found the explicit reference to Melchizedek in *Jub*. 13:25a just too much to take—either because of what it said directly or of how it was then being used".[136] Yet the extent of the supposed deletion makes this hypothesis less plausible than VanderKam's suggestion. If Longenecker's "quietistic Jew" did intend to remove the reference to Melchizedek, in order to keep the focus on Abraham and the Levitical Priesthood, it makes little sense that he also deleted the description of Abraham's victory. It would thus seem more economical to view the defective section as resulting from scribal error or from an accident.

3.2.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in *Jubilees*

Whether the defective section in *Jub.* 13 is the result of censure or of accident, the surviving text, deprived of all mention of the Melchizedek figure, presents a strong focus on the role of a priesthood—presumably the Levitical priesthood. The text describes the aetiology of a divinely sanctioned tithe that serves as perpetual financial support for the temple and its priesthood. The Melchizedek story and priesthood are thus absorbed into the Levitical priesthood.

The surviving text, with its extensive midrash on the tithe, corresponds well with one of the primary purposes of *Jubilees*: to emphasize the importance of the Levitical priesthood. In *Jub.* 13, the tithe that is paid by Abraham and is to be paid by his descendants is emphasized as constituting a means of sustenance of the priesthood. The passage falls into to the neutral category of interpretation, as the result of the rewriting is that the Melchizedek episode has been transformed so as to serving as a way of extolling the priesthood of the Levites.

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[136] "Melchizedek", 163–165.

3.3 The *Genesis Apocryphon*

3.3.1 Introduction to the *Genesis Apocryphon*

The only known copy of the *Genesis Apocryphon* (1QapGen ar) was found among the initial cache of scrolls in cave 1 at Qumran.[137] The *Genesis Apocryphon* consists of a rewriting of Genesis that exhibits few independent theological tendencies, although there is an inclination towards exalting the biblical figures Noah and Abraham more than in the *Vorlage*.[138] The provenance of the heavily damaged text, written in Aramaic, has been debated since its discovery. Although the *Genesis Apocryphon* was initially regarded as the work of the Qumran community, the use of the Aramaic language and the lack of sectarian terminology commonly associated with this community have since led most scholars to conclude that the *Genesis Apocryphon* did not originate at Qumran.[139] Instead, the copy found at Qumran, which is datable to between 25 B.C.E. and 50 C.E.,[140] appears to be based on the product of a separate, but in many ways comparable, community, and composed some time during the middle second century B.C.E.[141] While not composed at Qumran, the *Genesis Apocryphon* may have been introduced there and used, because it contained

[137] See Machiela, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 21–22, for a full account of the scroll's history of publication.

[138] The *Genesis Apocryphon* provides what Vermes, *Haggadic Studies*, 124–126, described as the missing link between the Biblical and the rabbinical midrash, executed in a "simple way" that does not show (intentionally or otherwise) any "scholarly learning, no exegetical virtuosity"; It has been argued that the text contains anti-Samaritan tendencies, Enochian perspectives, or an eschatological focus; cf. Machiela, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 6, who identifies "a clear 'psychologising interest' in the interaction of the patriarchs and their wives along with an interest in eroticism, demons and the sexual purity of the Israelite women".

[139] Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave I* (BibOr 18; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1966), 16–25, who found "practically no Essene theology in this work". This position has gained support from the majority of scholars; cf. Machiela, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 8; The use of Aramaic in texts generally indicates a non-Qumran origin, as such texts do not share the Qumran literature's theology and scribal practise; cf. ibid., 135–137.

[140] Cf. Fitzmyer, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 25–26; Machiela, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 17. The date has been supported by radiocarbon testing; cf. G. Bonani et al., "Radiocarbon Dating of the Dead Sea Scrolls", *Atiqot* 20, 1991, 27–32.

[141] Cf. Fitzmyer, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 23; VanderKam, *Textual and Historical Studies*, 287; and Machiela, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 17.

"elements [. . .] that could have been embraced by the sect, even if all the details may not have suited their needs or tastes".[142]

3.3.2 Melchizedek in the *Genesis Apocryphon*

The *Genesis Apocryphon*'s rewriting of the Melchizedek episode from Gen 14 closely follows the original account. This is noteworthy, as the majority of passages from Genesis have had additional material inserted. Chapter 22 is part of a small section, beginning at 21:23, which contains fewer additions than elsewhere in the *Genesis Apocryphon*, and presents a close paraphrase of the Genesis story. The part of the text coinciding with the Melchizedek episode is more sparing than the rest, perhaps because the sources used by the author were, for some reason, less extensive than those available for the rest of Genesis.[143] It seems more plausible, considering the additional material in *Jubilees* and later texts, that the shift in style at 21:23 instead marks a change in authorship within the *Genesis Apocryphon*.[144]

Regardless of who was responsible for the rewriting of the Melchizedek encounter in the *Genesis Apocryphon*, his primary purpose was to remove perceived difficulties within the original Genesis account. In what Mason has entitled a "demythologizing" of Genesis' account, most troublesome issues have either been removed or solved through minor changes.[145] The changes occur from the beginning of the episode to its end; the textual problem of the episode's ill-fitting nature within Gen 14 has been solved by the insertion of an explanation of the interruption in 22:12b–13*: The king of Sodom heard that Abram had brought back all the captives and all the booty and he went up to meet him. He came to Salem, that is Jerusalem, while Abram was camped*.[146]

The *Genesis Apocryphon* describes the meeting as taking place near a city that is now clearly identified as Jerusalem. This geographic gloss

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[142] Machiela, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 135–136; The composition indicates a connection to those responsible for *Jubilees* and *1 Enoch*, although the question of which text influenced which remains debated. The arguments have covered almost every possible permutation of this question; e.g., that *Genesis Apocryphon* was a source of *Jubilees*, that *Jubilees* was used by *Genesis Apocryphon*, that *Genesis Apocryphon* was heavily influenced by *1 Enoch*, or that they were all dependent on a common source, but with no direct connection between the texts; cf. ibid., 14–16 for a full discussion of the various possibilities.

[143] Cf. Machiela, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 6.

[144] Cf. Fitzmyer, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 23; Machiela, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 7.

[145] Mason, *"Priest Forever"*, 148.

[146] Aramaic text and translation from Fitzmyer, *Genesis Apocryphon*.

shows that the problem of the identity of the city was familiar to the author of the *Genesis Apocryphon*. Abraham's camp is located in the *Valley of Shaveh*, which, in what seems to be a gloss on an even earlier gloss, is further explained as *This is the Vale of the King, the Valley of Beth-Haccherem*. Here the king of Salem, Melchizedek, provides food and drink for Abraham and his host. The initial offering of *bread and wine* in Genesis has been transformed into the more generic *food and drink* (מאכל ומשתה) offered to *Abram and for all the men who were with him* (15). The narrative thereby describes a gift of hospitality from one king to another visiting dignitary and his entourage.

The priesthood of Melchizedek is described as serving *the Most High God* (אל עליון) (15b). It is not specified that he is the priest of Jerusalem, but this seems plausible from the context, and from the blessing he grants Abraham. In this sacerdotal duty, he blesses first Abraham in the name of the Most High God, and subsequently blesses God. The tithe has been retained from the Genesis *Vorlage* (*and he gave him a tithe*). Its difficulties seem at first to remain unexplained, as it is still not immediately apparent who pays the tithe and who receives it. Yet the additional comment that the tithe is to be paid from *the flocks of Elam and his confederates*—that is, from the spoils of the war just won by Abraham—clearly marks Abraham as the payer of the tithe. It appears that the author was unacquainted with the extensive addition to and alteration in the tithe passage found in the surviving parts of the *Jubilees* version. This indicates that, if there were indeed any contact between the composers of these two texts (see 3.3.1), it was rather *Jubilees* that used the *Genesis Apocryphon*.

3.3.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in the *Genesis Apocryphon*

In the *Genesis Apocryphon*'s rewriting of Gen 14:18–20, we find an account with several minor changes: the passage equates Salem with Jerusalem, provides reasons for the meeting between Abraham and Melchizedek, and changes *bread and wine* into *food and drink*. The rewriting author has also provided a text that clearly presents Abraham as the one who pays the tithe, as it is described as coming from the spoils of war recently gained by Abraham. The rewriting appears to rely solely on material from Gen 14 and minor traditions regarding the place of the encounter, and we find no familiarity with the unique traditions either from the *Greek Fragment on the Life of Abraham* or from *Jubilees*.

The passage does not bring anything new to the figure of Melchizedek, and thus extends the primary purpose of the original *Vorlage* in extolling

the Abraham figure. All the texts analysed so far, with the possible exception of *Jubilees*, have been part of the interpretative category that uses Melchizedek neutrally, primarily to extol a different figure; that of the patriarch Abraham in Genesis, the *Greek Fragment on the Life of Abraham*, and the *Genesis Apocryphon*, and the unnamed king in Psalm 110. The texts have shared a disinterest in the figure of Melchizedek itself, which has been employed solely because of the importance that the priest-king could grant the figure of Abraham. This exegetical program changes in the following texts, which represent a new category of interpretation in which Abraham disappears entirely, and the figure of Melchizedek becomes the protagonist—his characteristics evolving in strange ways in comparison to what we have encountered so far.

3.4 *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*

3.4.1 Introduction to *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*

The title *4QShirot 'Olat Ha-Shabbat* (*Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*), shared by nine manuscripts found at Qumran (4Q400–407; 11Q17) and one at Masada (Mas1k), was composed by Strugnell in 1960. It derives from the "songs" that divide the text into thirteen sections, arranged in a heptadic pattern in which the central seventh song constitutes the focal point of the text.[147] The songs describe the liturgical actions of angelic priests in a

[147] Cf., John Strugnell, "The Angelic Liturgy at Qumran: 4QSerek Shirot 'Olat Hassabbat" (VTSup 7, Congress Volume; Oxford, 1959 (1960)). Unless otherwise noted, text and translations are from Carol A. Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* (HSS 27; ed. Frank Moore Cross; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars' Press, 1985). Although there is no surviving title, at the beginning of eight of the thirteen songs can be found traces of a heading. This heading may be reconstructed (cf. James Charlesworth et al., *Angelic Liturgy: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* [The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations 4B; ed. James H. Charlesworth and Carol A. Newsom; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999], 2–3; Newsom, *Songs*, 6; James R. Davila, *Liturgical Works* [Eerdmans Commentaries on the Dead Sea Scrolls 6; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000], 87), as "For the Sage. The song of the holocaust offering of the xth Sabbath on the yth day of the zth month". Based on the first two lines of 4Q405, it appears that there were only songs for thirteen Sabbaths, and that the date formulae indicate that these were the first thirteen Sabbaths of the year; cf. Newsom, *Songs*, 5; According to Philip S. Alexander, *The Mystical Texts: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and Related Manuscripts* (Library of Second Temple Studies 61; ed. Lester L. Grabbe, London: T&T Clark, 2006), 48–50; 52, the songs may have been

heavenly temple, and contain a detailed angelogy.[148] As we will argue in the following that Melchizedek features prominently in this angelogy, it will be necessary to provide an overview of the structure and content of the text, as well as of the specifics of its angelogy.

The ten manuscripts relate the same liturgical text, but vary in age and the degree of damage.[149] The oldest MS (4Q400) is datable to ca. 75–50 B.C.E., while the youngest (Mas1k) may be as late as 50–73 C.E.[150] The age

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"performed" at Qumran, led by the Maskil. Alexander also considers it possible that the songs were repeated four times to cover an entire sabbatical year.

[148] However, some, e.g. Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (*STDJ* 42; Leiden: Brill, 2002), have argued that the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* do not refer to an angelic liturgy or a heavenly temple. Instead, they represent a worship of transformed (or "angelomorphic") human beings. While this is a possibility, the entire focus of the text goes against such a reading; nor does this reading explain the distinction in the text between the human and angelic priests (e.g., 4Q400 2 l. 2–7); For a critique of this argument, see e.g., Alexander, *Mystical Texts*, 45–47.

[149] There are minor variant readings between the nine MSS, but the text seems to have been faithfully reproduced without attempts to rewrite or edit it; cf. Alexander, *Mystical Texts*, 14.

[150] A more detailed analysis shows that the seven fragments of 4Q400 are written in a formal hand datable to the late Hasmonean period (ca. 75–50 B.C.E.), several letters exhibiting archaic features. 4Q400 contains material that originates from the opening of the first song and perhaps of the second. The thirty-eight fragments of 4Q401 are written in a style that closely resembles that of 4Q400 (with which it was originally grouped), yet is dated somewhat later (ca. 25 B.C.E.). The severely damaged content seems to contain material from the first half of *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*. 4Q402 consists of twelve fragments (ca. 25 B.C.E.), containing the end of the fourth song and the middle and concluding parts of the fifth song. The three fragments of 4Q403 and the twenty-five of 4Q404—two closely related manuscripts—are written in a similar style and date from the late Hasmonean to the early Herodian Period. They contain songs six through eight, but overlap. While 4Q404 is larger, 4Q403 presents the best-preserved text. 4Q405 (ca. one hundred and five fragments), slightly later in date than 4Q400, contains a large collection of fragments with material from songs six to eleven. The five short fragments of 4Q406 contain the beginning of either the sixth, eight, or ninth song; cf. Charlesworth et al., *Angelic Liturgy*, 2; (differing from Carol A. Newsom et al., *Qumran Cave 4: VI. Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 1* [DJD XI; ed. Emanuel Tov; Oxford: Clarendon, 1998], 395–398), or the end of the fifth or sixth song; cf. Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 85. 4Q407 contains two old fragments (apparently from the same period as 4Q400) that appear to be part of *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, but their location has so far not been unidentified. 11Q17 contains material written in an inconsistent handwriting style: some parts are in the manner of an early Herodian form, while others are in a more developed Herodian formal script. These styles approximately date the manuscript to either ca. 30 B.C.E. to 20 C.E. or to 20 C.E. to 50 C.E. Its forty-two fragments seem to correspond with songs seven to thirteen. Mas1k, the single fragment found at Masada, contains material that appears to be from the fifth and sixth songs. On account of its late formal Herodian hand, it is dated to as late as between 50 C.E. and the destruction of Masada in 73 C.E. For a fuller discussion of the

spread of the manuscripts indicates that the text must have been copied numerous times during the first century B.C.E. and C.E., and supports the hypothesis that the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* were extensively used and highly valued by the community.[151] The date of composition is tied to the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*'s provenance—if the text originated within the Qumran community, then a date of ca. B.C.E. 150–100 is likely. However, the text may be much older, perhaps from the third century, if composed elsewhere.[152] The similarities in theme, vocabulary, and content between *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and other Qumran texts could indicate a Qumran origin. In particular, the two texts 4Q286–4Q287 and 4Q510–4Q511 have been suggested as influences on *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, but when the textual relationship between these texts is closely examined, it instead appears that 4Q286–4Q287 and 4Q510–4Q511 were dependent on *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*.[153] The text also lacks any content that might clearly identify it as composed at Qumran, though in several instances the vocabulary is peculiar to texts produced there.[154] *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* thus appears to have originated elsewhere than in the Qumran community.[155] The community that produced the text appears to have been a well-organized priestly sect with a well-established liturgical practise.[156] Based on similarities in the calendar, the focus on the

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age and content of the fragments that constitute the manuscripts of *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, see Charlesworth et al., *Angelic Liturgy*, 1–2; Carol A. Newsom, "Shirot 'Olat ha-Shabbat", in *Qumran Cave 4: VI. Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part I* (DJD XI; ed. Emanuel Tov; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 173–175, 197–198, 221–223; 239–252; 253–255; 293–294; 399–402; Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 85–86; Florentino García Martínez, Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, and Adam S. van der Woude, "11QShirot 'Olat ha-Shabbat", in *Qumran Cave 11 II* (DJD XXIII; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 263–266.

[151] According to Carol A. Newsom, "'Sectually Explicit' Literature from Qumran", in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters* (ed. William H. Propp, Baruch Halpern, and David N. Freedman; Biblical and Judaic Studies 1; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 170, the number of manuscripts is rivalled only by those of the *Serek ha-Yahad* (twelve copies) and the various versions of *1 Enoch* (nine copies).

[152] Cf. Charlesworth et al., *Angelic Liturgy*, 4.

[153] Cf. Johann Maier, *Vom Kultus zur Gnosis: Studien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte der "Jüdischen Gnosis"* (Kairos, Religionswissenschaftliche Studien 1; Salzburg: O. Müller, 1964), 106–112; 133; Newsom, "'Sectually Explicit'", 181; Charlesworth et al., *Angelic Liturgy*, 9.

[154] Newsom, *Songs*, 23–29; Charlesworth et al., *Angelic Liturgy*, 7. That the text was also found outside of Qumran (although only in a single copy) contributes to the likelihood of an origin outside of the Qumran community.

[155] Cf., e.g., Newsom, "'Sectually Explicit'", 179–185; (Note the change of opinion since Newsom, *Songs*, 1–4); Charlesworth et al., *Angelic Liturgy*, 4–5; Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 88–90; Although some (e.g., Boccaccini, *Beyond*, 59) argue that they should be regarded as the product of the Qumran community.

[156] Cf., e.g., Newsom, "'Sectually Explicit'", 184n.13: " the liturgical form of [*Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*] assumes a rather well-organized community"; The *Songs of the*

priesthood, and the expanded angelology, the sect may have been similar in many ways to that which composed *Jubilees*, the *Aramaic Testament of Levi*, and the *Apocryphon of Levi*.[157] The *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* do, however, include numerous elements that would have been readily accepted by the Qumran community (such as the focus on offering "songs of praise" instead of animal sacrifices), explaining the number of copies found, their age spread, and their influence on Qumran traditions.[158] *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* may have been adopted by the community for liturgical use, perhaps providing an "experience of communion with the angels".[159] This "mystical experience" would have lasted thirteen weeks, corresponding with the first thirteen Sabbaths of the year.[160] After the climax in song seven, the participants would have experienced the *merkabah* and the celestial high priesthoods through the text in a "quasi-mystical liturgy designed to evoke a sense of being present in the heavenly temple".[161]

The thirteen songs are arranged according to a 5–1–1–1–5 structure, focusing on the central seventh song. Whereas the initial five songs mainly describe the angelic priesthoods with all their various duties, and the last five songs describe the temple and the angelic high priests, the central songs (6–8) are distinct in several ways. These contain the blessings uttered by the seven high priests, which increase in significance until they

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Sabbath Sacrifice contain no direct quotations and few allusions from Hebrew Scripture, but the description of the temple and its inhabitants may owe its basic structure to elements from Eze 1; 10; 40–48 and 1 Kgs 19:12, while Num 1–2;10, Isa 63:9–14; Ps 24:7–10; 68: 17–20; 104:1–4, and 1 Chr 28–29 may have been influential on the angelology and in the liturgical terminology; cf. Charlesworth et al., *Angelic Liturgy*, 8–9; Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 90.

[157] Cf. Maier, *Kultus*, 106–112; 133; Charlesworth et al., *Angelic Liturgy*, 4.

[158] Cf. Newsom, "'Sectually Explicit'", 173.

[159] Newsom, *Songs* 17–18; Cf. ibid., 59-72; Newsom, "'Sectually Explicit'", 181.

[160] Thirteen weeks wherein "the mysteries of the angelic priesthood are recounted, a hypnotic celebration of the sabbatical number seven produces an anticipatory climax at the center of the work", Newsom, *Songs*, 18–19; cf. Charlesworth et al., *Angelic Liturgy*, 4; and Alexander, *Mystical Texts*, 13, who describes the songs as "the pivotal text for the study of mysticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls".

[161] Newsom, *Songs*, 6; 59. This is also the model advocated by Maier, *Kultus*, 133, with the songs representing the idea of the temple as an intersection between heaven and earth. In this way, the communion narrated in the songs represents the Qumran community's view of serving alongside the angels in the continuous worship of God. Other possibilities have been offered, e.g., that the Sabbath Songs were part of the ritual in which the priesthood was consecrated, or rededicated, as the songs were recited during the period in which this was carried out (cf. Newsom, *Songs*, 72), or as an offering of praise instead of the Musaf sacrifice; cf., e.g., Bilha Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry* (*STDJ* 12; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 285; 293.

culminate in the inner room of God's temple.[162] Within *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, there is a progression from the first two songs (containing the only mention of human priests and worshippers; 4Q400 2 l. 1–3) to the sixth song, with its highly formulaic character and focus on the angelic priesthoods, to the crescendo in the seventh song with the seven times seven songs of praise performed by these angelic priesthoods, and finally, a descending pattern from song eight to thirteen.

The songs each contain unique elements, and a brief description of each is therefore necessary. Although the damaged state of the manuscripts means that several sections of the text are undecipherable, the surviving parts include a number of highlights. Initially, we hear that God established laws governing angelic priesthoods, in order to guarantee the purity of both priesthoods and the heavenly temple.[163] The temple itself is then described, with a mention of seven paths—the first instance of the heptadic theme. The groups of angels are described as *priests of the inner sanctum* (4Q400 1 i l. 19), *godlike ones of all the holiest of the holy ones* (4Q400 1 i l. 3), and *princes* (4Q400 1 i l. 12), each responsible for a *kingdom* (4Q400 1 ii l. 1). These seven kingdoms correspond to the seven priesthoods (4Q400 1 ii l. 7) established by God himself (4Q400 1 i l. 19: *He established for Himself priests of the inner sanctum*). These priesthoods are tasked with upholding the ritual purity of the heavenly temple, to teach all matters of holiness, to intercede between God and repentant sinners, and to punish the unrepentant.

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[162] Each division also exhibits a distinctive writing style; cf., e.g., Charlesworth et al., *Angelic Liturgy*, 3: "In contrast to the discursive style of Songs 1–5 and the use of highly formulaic repetition in Songs 6–8, the songs in the final section consist largely of nominal and participial sentences, incorporating sequences of elaborate construct chains"; and Newsom, *Songs*, 15: "There is an emphatic climatic structure to the song, too, with its culmination in the celestial holy of holies and the praise of the markabot themselves"; Alexander, *Mystical Texts*, 49–50, instead favours a climax in the thirteenth song based on a mystical interpretation in which the Maskil, by donning the celestial high-priestly robes, is transformed into something higher; and Christopher R. A. Morray-Jones, "The Temple Within: The Embodied Divine Image and Its Worship in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish and Christian Sources", in *SBLSP* 37:1 (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars' Press, 1998), 417–420, found the climax to occur in the twelfth song with its description of the celestial throne room. Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 87–90, favours a climax in the eleventh and twelfth songs, as they would have been associated with a renewal of the covenant. The focus on the number seven provides an interesting parallel to the Apocalypse of John and its heptadic structure, as noted by David Aune, *The Cultic Setting of Realized Eschatology in Early Christianity* (NovTSup 28; Leiden: Brill, 1972), 32n.2, who believes this to reveal that the two texts are "historically and genetically" related.

[163] Newsom et al., *Liturgical Texts*, 178–179; Newsom, *Songs*, 7; Charlesworth et al., *Angelic Liturgy*, 2–3, provides a reconstruction of which song each fragment may have belonged to.

This group of elite, priestly angels praise God and are favourably compared to the earthly priesthood.[164] Although the content of songs three through five is, for the most part, too fragmentary to provide any useful information, the final part of the fifth song narrates how the angelic hosts are preparing to fight a war waged in (or from) heaven.[165] The central songs focus on describing the seven chief princes among the angels, with seven exhortations to praise in the seventh song. The heavenly temple is then depicted as being blessed by the angels, while the temple itself and all its individual parts praise God. In the eighth song, the seven angelic priesthoods are mentioned again, situated in seven sanctuaries or kingdoms, distributed throughout the temple. The seven primary angelical figures are said to give an *offering of their tongues* as each angelic prince in turn joins in the praise of God.[166] The *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* then provide a further description of the heavenly temple and the wide range of heavenly beings in the vestibule. In songs eleven and twelve, the *debirim* are depicted, and more praises of God are heard, this time from the temple's gates and portals. The final song, of which only the first part survives, provides a further description of the angelic high priests and the vestments in which they perform their sacral functions.[167]

3.4.2 Melchizedek in *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*

The description and duties of the heavenly temple, of its seven priesthoods, and of the angels who serve in them is the central subject of *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*.[168] While the priestly functions of the angels correspond to what we find in other texts (such as *Jub*. 2.18), the songs contain a more complex angelogy than elsewhere.[169] This focus on establishing an angelogy shows in the many varied appellations used for the angels in

[164] Cf. Newsom, *Songs*, 8. The parallel to the two highest classes of angels who observe the Sabbath in *Jubilees* (2:18) is striking. The congregation may have believed themselves to be the counterpart to the celestial angels—they were the earthly priests, the upholders of purity, and the guardians who, in this way, had a text describing their *imitatio angelorum*; cf. Alexander, *Mystical Texts*, 16.
[165] Cf. Newsom, *Songs*, 8–9.
[166] Cf. ibid., 9–10.
[167] Cf. ibid., 10–12.
[168] As ibid., 16, observes; "Although the individual songs all begin with an imperative call to praise God, it is not really God but the angelic priesthood and heavenly temple which are the subjects of the work".
[169] Cf., e.g., Alexander, *Mystical Texts*, 55, who states that the "Sabbath Songs contains the richest angelology of any Second Temple period Jewish text".

Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and in the functions ascribed to them.[170] The select angels serve as priests in the heavenly temple (4Q400 1 i l. 4 *the eternally holy, the holiest of the holy ones, and they have become for Him priests*), where they perform sacrifices and maintain the purity of the temple (4Q400 1 i l. 14). They are described as wearing what may be high-priestly ephods (4Q405 23 ii l.5–10), and are said to teach or instruct in matters of holiness (4Q400 1 i l. 17), presumably to the community responsible for the text (cf. 4Q401 14 ii l.7). They thus mirror the responsibilities of the tribe of Levi on earth.[171] The angels are also responsible for carrying out divine judgments against the wicked and for mollifying the divine anger against those repentant (4Q400 1 i l. 16).[172] These angels are arranged throughout the temple in seven camps (4Q403 1 ii 11), and the use of various military terms throughout the songs (though primarily in song five) supports the interpretation that these angels were believed to play an important role in the eschatological war fought on behalf of God (described in 4Q402 4 l. 7–10 as *the war of the godlike beings*).[173]

The angelogy of *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* appears to function as a heavenly paradigm of the division within the Israelite tribes. Like the tribe of Levi on earth, the angelic priests were responsible for the heavenly sanctuary, teaching, and sacrificing. We also find hierarchic structures within the priesthood: scattered throughout the thirteen songs are references to the priestly angels being divided into seven priesthoods, each led by deputy high priests and high priests (4Q403 1 ii l. 11; 4Q405 23 ii 5–10).[174] Yet there are further signs of an additional level within this hierarchy, as several references are made to a single angelic high priest ranked above the six other high priests.[175] Five of these references are of special importance for this study: in the case of three, the name Melchizedek may plausibly be

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[170] The angels in *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* are described by a great variety of designations, including מלאכי (*angels*), אלי / אלוהים (*heavenly being/s*), ראשי (*chiefs*), קדושי (*holy ones*), משרתי (*ministers*), נשיאי (*princes*), כוהני מרומי רום (*priests of the highest heights*), and כוהני קורב (*priests of the inner sanctum*).

[171] This is similar to what we find more clearly expressed in *Jub*. 2.2; cf. Alexander, *Mystical Texts*, 56.

[172] Newsom, *Songs*, 30. This provides an interesting connection with the atoning and punishing angels in CD II 3–6, according to Newsom et al., *Liturgical Texts*, 182.

[173] The fragment continues in l.8 with "[. . .] for to the God of the elim (belong) the [weapo]ns of wa[r. . .]", and in l. 9 "[. . .] the heavenly beings run to [His] muster, and there is the sound of tumult [. . .]"; cf. Newsom, *Songs*, 28–29; and Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 114.

[174] Cf. Alexander, *Mystical Texts*, 56–57. These seven high priests may be a reflection of the idea of the seven angels in Ezek 9:1–2, or of the mention in the *Testament of Levi* 8 of the seven high angels who serve as priests in heaven; cf. Newsom, *Songs*, 71.

[175] Cf. Newsom, *Songs*, 32; Alexander, *Mystical Texts*, 56–57.

restored (4Q401 11 l. 3; 4Q401 22 l. 3; 11Q17 ii 3 l. 7), and another two refer to an unidentified, yet important, angel which, based on the first three references, may also be the Melchizedek figure (4Q401 23 l. 1; 4Q403 1 ii l. 10).[176]

The first of the possible occurrences of the name is in 4Q401 11 l. 3, in what may be part of song three: *[Melchi]zedek, priest in the assemb[ly of God]* (צדק כוהן בעד[ת אל [מלכי). Here the most plausible reconstruction of the text's צדק is as part of the proper name Melchizedek.[177] Judging from the context, כוה should probably be interpreted as *high priest*, rather than *priest*.[178] The second possible reference to the name occurs in 4Q401 22 l. 3:]צדק מל]כי (*[. . . Mel]chizedek [. . .]*).[179] This fragment may be part of song five, and the mention in l. 1–2 of *. . .]holy ones of [. . .] they fill their hands*[. . .]) appears to refer to a priestly ritual.[180] The third and most plausible occurrence of the name is in song eight (11Q17 ii 3 l. 7), where the reconstruction of the name Melchizedek ([מלכ]י צדק) constitutes the most plausible option: [*the chiefs of the princes of the won]derful [priesthoods] of Melch[i zedek]*).[181]

Fragment 4Q401 23 l. 1 presents the only evidence of the term נשיא (*prince*) used in the singular:]נשיא קו[[. ([. . .] *prince of ho*[*lines . . .*).[182] According to both Newsom and Davila, this constitutes a plausible

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[176] Cf., e.g., Alexander, *Mystical Texts*, 56, who states that "it is probable that the celestial high priest in Sabbath Songs was designated Melchizedek".

[177] Newsom, "Shirot", 205; Newsom et al., *Angelic Liturgy*, 33. Davila, *Liturgical*, 162; P. Alexander, *Mystical Texts*, 22; and Florentino García Martínez, Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, and Adam S. van der Woude, "11QMelchizedek," in *Qumran Cave 11 II 11Q2-18 11Q20-31*. DJD XXIII (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 270.

[178] Alexander, *Mystical Texts*, 22.

[179] The reconstruction of the name Melchizedek here has been termed "tempting" by Newsom, *Songs*, 143; as "reasonably likely" by Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 162; and as "plausible" by Alexander, *Mystical Texts*, 22.

[180] It could also be part of a prebattle consecration (similar to that found in the *Testament of Moses* 10:2); cf. Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 114; 162–163; Newsom, "Shirot", 213.

[181] This reconstruction has been characterized as "very attractive" by Davila, *Liturgical Works*; and has been followed by García Martínez, Tigchelaar, and van der Woude, "11QShirot", 266; Florentino García Martínez, Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, and Adam S. van der Woude, "11QJubilees", in *Qumran Cave 11 II* (DJD XXIII; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 207–220; The reconstruction of this sentence is partly supported by parallels in 4Q403 1 ii l. 18–48 and 4Q405 8–9 l. 1–6, but unfortunately the part in which the name of Melchizedek might occur has not been preserved in these fragments; cf. García Martínez, Tigchelaar, and van der Woude, "11QShirot", 269–270.

[182] The location of this fragment within *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* is unknown, but it may have been part of song five or four; cf., e.g., Charlesworth et al., *Angelic Liturgy*, 38–39; Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 164.

reference to Melchizedek.[183] That 4Q401 23 l. 1 also includes the word *eternal* in this context may indicate a possible connection to Ps 110:4. In 4Q403 1 ii l. 10, perhaps part of the central seventh song, we find a *tabernacle of the exalted chief* (משכן רוש רום), that may be a further reference to a "single superior angel whose special privilege is service in the highest sanctuary".[184] Several other references in *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* also imply the existence of a single angel of a rank higher than the others, and are thus also of interest. They include 4Q403 1 ii l. 9–16 and 4Q405 7 l.8, where we find *his [pr]iesthood*;[185] 4Q403 1 ii l. 24, perhaps from song eight, which mention *the priest of the interior*;[186] and 4Q403 1 ii l. 5, which refers to *the chief of the godlike beings*.[187] These references all contribute to the interpretation that one angel is ranked above the rest. Considering the previous indications of the presence of Melchizedek and the use of the singular here, it seems plausible that this *exalted chief*—as well as *the chief of the godlike beings* in 4Q403 1 ii l. 5—refers to "an exalted chief angel, presumably the heavenly high priest, Melchizedek".[188]

When combined, these scattered references from throughout the thirteen songs make it plausible that the figure of Melchizedek was used by the author of *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*. In addition, the figure is presented in both angelic and high-priestly dress. As Newsom points out, this liturgical role is important, as it "occurs in an actual liturgical text and not merely in a haggadic or speculative document".[189] Instead, it is the central element in a document with distinct priestly and liturgical interests. It also appears (if the presumed references to Melchizedek in 4Q401 11 and 22 are part of song five) that Melchizedek was given a dominant role in the eschatological war to be fought in or from heaven, thereby giving the figure a new warlike aspect.[190] Melchizedek's change from a human priest serving at the earthly temple in Salem to an exalted celestial being serving in the heavenly temple corresponds well with the predominant theme in *Songs of*

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[183] Cf., e.g., Newsom, *Songs*, 144; Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 163–164.
[184] Cf. Newsom, *Songs*, 235. A tabernacle is also mentioned in 4Q405 20 ii-21-22 l.7).
[185] Cf. Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 131; Newsom, "Shirot", 325.
[186] Cf. Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 132.
[187] Newsom, "Shirot", 279–282.
[188] Ibid., 285, notes the similar function of Michael in *3* (Greek) *Apocalypse of Baruch*, and Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 128–129, refers to two other parallels: *3 En.* 15B:1, where Metatron serves at a "great tabernacle of light on high", and Heb 8:2; 5; 9:11, where Christ serves as a high priest at the heavenly tabernacle. In addition, Rev 13:6 and 15:5 could be mentioned.
[189] Newsom, *Songs*, 37.
[190] Cf. Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 167: "The cumulative force of the evidence makes it probable that the heavenly high priest Melchizedek played a role in the cosmology and perhaps the eschatology of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice".

the Sabbath Sacrifice, in which the angelic priesthood appears to have served as a paradigm for the earthly priesthood.

3.4.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*

The *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* present a liturgical text composed ca. the second century B.C.E. by a well-organized and priestly community, and one copied for several centuries by the Qumran community. In *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*'s extensive angelology, we identified several passages that, according to current scholarly consensus, should be interpreted as referring to the Melchizedek figure, though preserving few influences from the Melchizedek of Genesis or Psalm 110. Apart from its name and reputation, only the priestly aspect of the figure (and perhaps the eternal aspect; cf. 4Q401 23 l. 1) remains identifiable.

Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice thus constitute the earliest evidence of a text in our interpretative category of writings exhibiting an exalted Melchizedek, and constitutes a sudden break from the previous texts and their treatment of the Melchizedek figure. The angelic Melchizedek in *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* is no longer human, but rather an exalted high priest at the head of the heavenly cultic service to God. Melchizedek presides above the other angelic high priests in the temple of God, wearing priestly clothes, performing cultic duties, and singing songs of praise to God. Melchizedek also appears in association with teaching in matters of holiness, saving the repentant, carrying out judgment upon the unrepentant, and serving in the eschatological war. The focus of *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* is on the angelic priesthood, presented as the true priesthood, and closely tied to the sect that produced the text. The angelic priesthood serves to guarantee the superiority of its earthly copy over that of the *Anstalt*—presumably the Levitical priesthood. Melchizedek' priesthood in *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* is thus cast as the primary antagonist of the Levitical priesthood. *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* thus constitute the earliest evidence of the category of interpretation in which Melchizedek has been exalted.

3.5 4Qʿ Amram

3.5.1 Introduction to 4Qʿ Amram

In addition to *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (and 11Q13, a text we will discuss shortly), two additional texts might refer to the figure of Melchizedek. The first of these, 4Qʿ Amram^{a-g} ar, consists of six fragmentary manuscripts (4Q543–549) written in Aramaic and dating from ca. the middle or late second century B.C.E. [191]

[191] 4Q543–549 has been given a variety of titles, including "Visions of Amram", "Testament of Amram", and "4Qʿ Amram" (which we will use). All translations and references are from Émile Puech, *Qumran Cave 4. XXII: Textes araméens, première partie: 4Q529–549* (DJD XXXI; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001). Although 4Qʿ Amram includes elements common to the texts written at Qumran (e.g., a strong focus on cosmic dualism), because of the text's Aramaic language, it is likely that 4Qʿ Amram originated elsewhere; cf. Devorah Dimant, "Qumran Sectarian Literature", in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum, section 1; ed. Michael E. Stone; Philadelphia, Pa.: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1984), 488: "practically all the sectarian writings published to date are written in Hebrew"; Maxwell J. Davidson, *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1–36, 72–108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran* (JSPSup 11; ed. James H. Charlesworth, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 265. Yet the community responsible for 4Qʿ Amram would, in many respects, have been similar to the Qumran community. 4Q543, 4Q544, and 4Q547 have been dated to the middle or late 2nd century B.C.E. by Puech, *4Q529–549*, 285–287; cf. Julio Trebolle-Barrera, "Qumran Evidence for a Biblical Standard Text and for Non-Standard and Parabiblical Texts", in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context* (ed. Timothy Lim et al.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 104; According to Michael E. Stone, "Amram", in EDSS (ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 23, the origin of 4Qʿ Amram may be connected with 4QTQahat and *Aramaic Levi Document*, forming a "series of priestly instructions" (with 4Qʿ Amram and 4QTQahat dependent upon *Aramaic Levi*); This idea is similar to the one initially suggested by Józef T. Milik, "4Q Visions de ʿAmram et une citation d'Origène", *RB* 79 (1972): 97, although he dates 4Qʿ Amram to the beginning of the 1st century C.E. These ideas were expanded upon in Jonas C. Greenfield, Michael E. Stone, and Esther Eshel, *The Aramaic Levi Document: Edition, Translation, Commentary* (Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha 19; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 29–31, with the suggestion that this connection may have been caused by the authors of 4QTQahat and 4Qʿ Amram seeking to legitimate the content of the Aramaic Levi Document, especially its "continuity of the priestly line [from Qahat to Aaron] and its teaching", ibid., 31. Based upon the literary, linguistic, and conceptual relationship (e.g., the elements in the dream vision), other texts (the *Book of Giants*, Daniel, and 1QapGen) have been suggested to be part of this cluster of connected texts.

In 4Qʿ Amram, we find the final words of Amram to his children, Aaron, Moses, and Miriam. During this testament, Amram shares a dream vision in which he observed a תגר רב (*great dispute*) between two angels who were דאנין (*judging*) him. One of these heavenly beings serves as an *angelus interpres*, introducing himself with *I am the ruler over all that is of God*, and looks at Amram with a *happy* or *smiling* visage (4Q543 5 l. 4–8; 14 l. 0–3; 5Q544 1 l. 10–14). The speaker then describes the other being (a *watcher*) as *all his way is da[r]k and in darkness [. . .] he rules over all the dark*, and resembles a dark serpent, clad in multicoloured garments. According to the angel, these two have sovereignty over all humanity, with each representing a faction of the dualistic struggle between light and darkness. The vision ends with Amram being informed that the priestly line should now be traced from Abraham to himself, thus legitimating the priestly claims of Amram and his descendants.

3.5.2 Melchizedek in 4Qʿ Amram

In 1972, Milik offered a new interpretation and reconstruction of a central part of this enigmatic text.[192] His reconstruction focuses on the תלתה שמהן (*three names*) mentioned in 5Q544 3 l. 2 and on the single surviving name מלכי רשע (*Melchiresha*) in 4Q544 2 l. 13.[193] Milik found that the mention of "three names" indicates that each of the two beings originally had three names. Further, he reasoned that "the two figures are described according to a strict antithetical parallelism".[194] Because one of these names was Melchiresha, the other name would have been Melchizedek—its logical etymological counterpart and antithetical parallel. Milik drew the remaining four names from related texts (11Q13 and 1QM 13 l. 10–11), and his final reconstruction reads: *[And these are his three names: Belial, Prince of Darkness], and Melchiresha' . . . [and he answered and sa]id to me: [My] three names [are Michael, Prince of Light and Melchizedek]*. Milik and others since him have found this hypothetical list of names to represent the most plausible reconstruction of the surviving text.[195]

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[192] Milik, "4Q Visions", 85–86.
[193] Puech, *4Q529–549*, 301–302; 326–328.
[194] Milik, "4Q Visions", 85–86; Cf. Darrell Hannah, *Michael and Christ: Michael Traditions and Angel Christology in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 73.
[195] Cf., e.g., Puech, *4Q529–549*, 329; Paul J. Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchireša*ʿ (CBQMS 10; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981), 36; Hannah, *Michael*, 72–73.

Milik's reconstruction has since been supported by the arguments of other scholars. Hannah has drawn attention to how fitting it is that the angels of light and darkness appear in a testament attributed to Moses' father, as "the sectarians saw in the events of the Exodus a struggle between these two angels".[196] Milik's choice of the names Melchiresha and Belial is strengthened by the way these two names are used interchangeably in a variety of texts from Qumran, for example, in the curses from 4Q280 and 1QS ii l. 5–9. In addition, 4Qʿ Amram may also be closer to the text of Gen 14:18 and Ps 110:4 (and thereby to their use of the name Melchizedek) than normally supposed. The choice of priestly appellations indicates such a connection, as in Gen 14:18 we read *priest of God Most High*, similarly to 4Qʿ Amram 4Q545 4 l. 16, *a holy priest is he[to God Most High* (although this reconstruction is partly based on the related passage in *the Aramaic Levi Document* 5:8, *priest to God Most High*).[197] We also find parallels between Psalm 110 and 4Qʿ Amram in the choice of words used to describe the priesthood in question: Psalm 110, *a priest forever,* and *a priest for eternity* in 4Q545 4 l. 19. Milik's hypothetical reconstruction and these textual similarities would appear to provide circumstantial evidence of a possible use of the name Melchizedek in 4Qʿ Amram.

3.5.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in 4Qʿ Amram

First, we must emphasize that any reconstruction in which five out of six names are purely speculative cannot be used as a foundation for any conclusions. Thus, Milik's reconstruction remains hypothetical, as not even a single letter of the name Melchizedek is found in this text. As a result, we will regard this as merely circumstantial evidence for the existence of an additional non-Qumranic tradition in which an exalted figure of Melchizedek may have appeared.

Should Milik's reconstruction be correct, it presents another instance of a text within the exalted category of interpretation, where the figure of Melchizedek has shed its human skin and become an angelic entity—a Melchizedek who has the righteous part of humanity as his responsibility, and who represents the forces of light in the dualistic battle against the forces of darkness. The reference to the Angel of Darkness would also constitute the first link between Melchizedek and a single named adversary, in this case Melchiresha.

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[196] E.g., CD 5.17b–19; Cf. Hannah, *Michael*, 73.
[197] Puech, *4Q529–549*, 342–343.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Milik's reconstruction is that it presents the possibility of the Melchizedek figure being part of a text that sought to augment the priestly lineage with the inclusion of Amram and his descendants, in order to appropriate the priestly line and adapt it to its own purposes. If so, Melchizedek would again have been used by a sectarian community to demonstrate the superiority of its priesthood over the established priesthood, presumably the Levitical.

3.6 4Q246

3.6.1 Introduction to 4Q246

As with 4Qʿ Amram, the figure of Melchizedek has been suggested as the protagonist of 4Q246, in this case by García Martínez in 1997.[198] 4Q246 has survived as only two short columns, one heavily damaged. The manuscript is written in Aramaic and in a hand dated to the last third of the first century B.C.E.

3.6.2 Melchizedek in 4Q246

The main point of interest in 4Q246 for this study is found in the first line of the second column: *He shall be named the son of God and they shall call him son of the Most High like a shooting star.*[199] The use of the titles *son of God* and *son of the Most High* in a Palestinian B.C.E. setting is in itself significant, and the efforts to identify the character(s) described in this manuscript have produced several diverse interpretations.[200] One, by García

[198] Florentino García Martínez, "The Eschatological Figure of 4Q246", in *Qumran and Apocalyptic: Studies on the Aramaic Texts from Qumran* (*STDJ* 9; ed. Florentino García Martínez and A. S. van der Woude, Leiden: Brill, 1992), 172–179.

[199] Aramaic text and English translation from ibid.

[200] Cf., e.g., Milik who suggested that 4Q246 referred to Alexander Balas, and Flusser to to an Antichrist (both cited from ibid., 168–169); Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays* (Reprint with added addendum of "The Contribution of Qumran Aramaic to the Study of the New Testament", in NTSt (1974); 382–401 (SBLMS 25; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars' Press, 1984), 91–111, argued that the text is referring to "the restorer of the Davidic kingship".

Martínez, argues that behind the two titles we find "a positive character and an angelic nature", that in the original text may have been "Melchizedek, Michael, the Prince of Light, etc."[201]

García Martínez's reconstruction relies mainly upon the traditions found in other Qumran texts (such as 4QpsDan ar, 4Q175, 1QH, 11Q13, and 4Qʿ Amram) and their references to exalted-angelic beings. This figure, according to García Martínez's interpretation, is central in winning the eschatological war and bringing about eternal peace for "the people of God" (Col II l. 4).[202] This figure would admittedly share many of the traits attributed to the Melchizedek figure that we identified in *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, but the relevant passages (l. 1–7a) could as well be interpreted as describing how God himself (the subject of the text from l. 7b onwards) will intervene at the end of the war to reunite the nations. Alternatively, it could have another of the exalted angels as its main character (for example, Michael or the Angel of Light).

3.6.2 Conclusions to Melchizedek in 4Q246

On the basis of the surviving parts of 4Q246, we must deem it difficult to follow García Martínez's interpretation, to the extent that it makes the Melchizedek figure's participation in the original text plausible. While the text may have included the Melchizedek figure, the present state of 4Q246 means that this hypothesis must remain conjecture, similarly to the case of 4Qʿ Amram. Although the interpretation suggested by García Martínez fits well with the sectarian pattern of exalted angels participating in eschatological conflict, 4Q246 cannot carry the weight of the claim that its protagonist is Melchizedek.

As a result, García Martínez's hypothesis should, at best, be considered further circumstantial evidence for the existence of other members of the interpretative category of Melchizedek being exalted in the texts found at Qumran.[203]

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[201] García Martínez, "Eschatological Figure", 173.

[202] Cf. ibid., 178–179.

[203] In a similar category, we will place J. C. Greenfield's hypothesis (referred to in Machiela, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 18) that the "chosen one" from 4Q534 is a reference to Melchizedek. Yet there are no convincing indications within the text that this child (described in great detail, e.g., as having red hair and marks on his thighs (col. 1 l. 1)) has any connections with the figure of Melchizedek.

3.7 11Q13

3.7.1 Introduction to 11Q13

11Q13 (or 11QMelchizedek) is the only surviving copy of one of the more interesting texts found in the caves at Qumran.[204] Here the figure of Melchizedek appears once again, this time as the primary character (the name occurs at least four times in the surviving text: 2 l. 5; 8; 9; 13; and, perhaps, 22). The three surviving columns of 11Q13, only one of which is well preserved, are regarded as a characteristic sectarian text composed at Qumran.[205] The text has been dated as originating from late in the second century B.C.E.[206] to the middle of the first century B.C.E.[207] 11Q13 alludes,

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[204] 11Q13 was discovered in 1956, but was not published until 1965, Adam S. van der Woude, "Melchisedek als himmlische Erlösergestalt in den neugefundenen eschatologischen Midraschim aus Qumran Höhle XI", *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 14 (1965): 354–73; Hebrew text and English translation from Florentino García Martínez, Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, and Adam S. van der Woude, "11QMelchizedek", in *Qumran Cave 11 II 11Q2–18 11Q20–31* (DJD XXIII; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 221–42, unless otherwise noted.

[205] Due to the ongoing deterioration of the manuscript, the number of fragments has changed from its original publication to today; cf. García Martínez, Tigchelaar, and van der Woude, "11QMelchizedek", 222, who counted fifteen fragments; Annette Steudel, "Melchizedek", in EDSS (ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 536, who mentions fourteen; thirteen by Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London: Penguin Books, 1962), 500. The best-preserved column consists of twenty-five lines, but with numerous lacunae and illegible parts. Of the other two columns, only a few fragments have survived, and the entire manuscript is too damaged to reveal what its original size may have been. Cf. ibid., 169–170, who suggests that, as the surviving text is concerned with the tenth Jubilee, the lost parts of 11Q13 may have described the previous nine Jubilees. Among the arguments of the text having been composed at Qumran is its distinct sectarian vocabulary; cf., e.g., Jonathan G. Campbell, *The Exegetical Texts* (Companion to the Qumran Scrolls 4; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 56. A voice of dissidence is that of Horton. who argues that the text is decidedly uncharacteristic of the sect; Horton, *Melchizedek*, 80–82.

[206] Among these are Steudel, "Melchizedek", 536, who argues for its completion at the end of the 2nd century B.C.E., and thereby regards 11QMelchizedek as "the oldest purely exegetical text from Qumran"; Cf. Annette Steudel, *Der Midrasch zur Eschatologie aus der Qumrangemeinde (4QMidrEschat(a.b): Materielle Rekonstruktion, Textbestand, Gattung und traditionsgeschichtliche Einordnung des durch 4Q174 ("Florilegium") und 4Q177 ("Catena A") Repräsentierten Werkes aus den Qumranfunden* (*STDJ* 13; Leiden: Brill, 1993), 183; 196; Emile Puech, "Notes sur le manuscrit de XIQMelkîsédeq", *RevQ* 12 (1987): 507–510.

cites, and interprets numerous passages from the Hebrew Bible, but the central strands within this "web of the text" are Lev 25 and Isa 61:1–3.[208] These passages are used (with further material from Dan 9:24; Ps 82:1) to describe a division of history into ten Jubilees.[209] The initial eschatological events occur in its first week, and the culmination is in a final Day of Atonement.[210]

3.7.2 Melchizedek in 11Q13

The surviving parts of 11Q13 present a text focused on the function and purpose of the Melchizedek figure, and yet the interpretation and connotations of these continue to trouble interpreters. The various interpretations of the text will thus be a central point in the following section. The initial question is whether or not 11Q13 portrays Melchizedek as a human or as heavenly being, and if the latter is the case, as what type of supernatural entity. After that, the individual aspects and functions of Melchizedek will be examined, in order to provide a summary of the figure in 11Q13.

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[207] Cf. Vermes, *Complete*, 500–502; Milik, "Milkî-sedek", 97; Kobelski, *Melchizedek*, 3; García Martínez, Tigchelaar, and van der Woude, "11QMelchizedek", 223.

[208] Fitzmyer, "Further Light", described the passages from Lev 25 and Isa 61 as the "thread which apparently runs through the whole text and ties together its various elements"; cf. Daniel F. Miner, "A Suggested Reading for 11Q Melchizedek 17", *JSJ* 2 (1971): 144–148; James A. Sanders, "The Old Testament in 11Q Melchizedek", *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 5 (1973): 373; George J. Brooke, "Melchizedek (11QMelch)", in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (ed. David Noel Freedman, David F. Graf, and John D. Pleins; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1992), 687–688; VanderKam, "Sabbatical Chronologies", 170; Trebolle-Barrera, "Qumran Evidence", 93; Campbell, *Exegetical Texts*, 58.

[209] Cf. Kobelski, *Melchizedek*, 49–50.

[210] Cf. Davidson, *Angels*, 256; "The Functions of Isa 61:1–2 in 11Q Melchizedek", *JBL* 88:4 (1969): 469, noted how Isa 61:1–2 "provides the eschatological context for the pesher of the jubilee year, suggests the eschatological motifs of favour and vengeance around which the figure of Melchizedek is developed" and "Though it is never quoted at length, this latter passage stands behind our document and appears in the form of Stichwörter at crucial points"; cf. Rick van de Water, "Michael or Yhwh? Toward Identifying Melchizedek in 11Q13", *JSP* 16: 1 (2006): 79; Vermes, *Complete*, 500, sees a direct dependency of 11Q13 on Dan 1:13 and the Son of Man, who carries out God's judgment. The figure of Melchizedek would thus serve as an intertype between the Son of Man in Daniel (where God judges and the Son of Man carries out the judgment), and that of *1 En.* 37–71 and the Synoptic Gospels (where the Son of Man both judges and carries out the judgment).

The hypothesis that Melchizedek in 11Q13 should be interpreted as a human being has been put forward primarily by García Martínez.[211] He interpreted Melchizedek as a continuation of the figure from Gen 14 and Psalm 110, who as king exerts his influence over humanity, and as priest is associated with the Day of Atonement. García Martínez further detects connections between this figure and the messianic idea, although, as he also notes, neither the word *Messiah* nor *Anointed* features in the surviving parts of the text. Melchizedek is instrumental in gaining peace and salvation for the righteous, and partakes in eschatological war, judgment, and atonement. García Martínez thus identifies him as a human Messiah figure.[212]

Contrary to García Martínez, most scholars, on the basis of the description and actions of the figure of Melchizedek in 11Q13, have found that it cannot be interpreted as a human being. Instead, numerous suggestions have been made as to which specific type of "nonhuman" being would then best describe the Melchizedek of 11Q13. Milik has argued that the name represents a hypostasis of God; Cockerill and Manzi have both suggested that the name should be understood as a qualitative title (*King of Righteousness* and *King of Justice*, respectively) used to describe Yahweh.[213] An important part of the argument for interpreting

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[211] García Martínez, "Eschatological Figure".

[212] Ibid., 179; This line of interpretation is somewhat similar to that of Rainbow, who identified the recipient of the passage in 11QMelchizedek 2 l. 10–11 as God, rather than Melchizedek. "Melchizedek as a Messiah at Qumran", *BBR* 7 (1997): 193. Rainbow thereby regards the Melchizedek of 11Q13 as a human being—the Anointed One mentioned in Daniel. Carmignac also concluded that there exists no trace in the text describing Melchizedek as a heavenly being; Jean Carmignac, "Le document de Qumran sur Melchisédeq" 7 (1970): 365–367; referred to in Delcor, "Melchizedek", 133.

[213] Milik, "Milkî-sedek", 125; Gareth L. Cockerill, "Melchizedek or 'King of Righteousness'", *Evangelical Quarterly* 63:4 1991): 308; and Franco Manzi, *Melchizedek e l'angelologia nell'epistola Agli Ebri e a Qumran* (AnBib 136; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1997), 31; 51n.98; 64, although he does not dispute Melchizedek having been an intermediary character at some point (ibid., 91–92). van de Water, "Michael", 76–77, in an attempt to reconcile the two arguments regarding the nature of Melchizedek, suggested interpreting the name as both referring to an angel (or a type of divine mediator) and as a title for Yahweh, based on the figure of the anointed one from Dan 9:26. Margaret Barker, *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel's Second God* (London: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 88–89; 224, also proposes that the name Melchizedek in 11Q13 refers to Yahweh, yet with the additional unique interpretation that Yahweh does not refer to the Jewish God, but rather to his son and viceroy. In ibid., 39, she states that "*The only possible conclusion* [to the content of 11Q13] *is that Melchizedek, the heavenly high priest, was the LORD, the God of Israel"* (author's emphasis). She also concludes that the Melchizedek figure in 11Q13 was the reason why "Jesus is depicted as judge and warrior in the Book of Revelation". Although she also states that "it is now clear that he [i.e., Melchizedek] was the Messiah, expected to

Melchizedek as a circumscription of God is the description of the righteous—in l. 5 said to be the נחלת מלכי צדק (*lot of Melchizedek*). If this were the case, it would be the only known reference in the Qumran writings where such a *lot* is not God's. However, this issue should not be overstressed, as there are similar examples of "outsourced" authority (such as the Prince of Light in 1QM 13 l., who is said to have *all the spirits of truth under his dominion*).[214] Indeed, the reference in 11Q13 2 l. 13 to Melchizedek carrying out *the ven[geance] of E[l's] judgment*, provides adequate evidence for a clear distinction between God and Melchizedek in 11Q13.[215]

The most convincing interpretation of the figure of Melchizedek in 11Q13 remains that of an entirely angelic being who serves in God's heavenly court.[216] This interpretation builds upon several features of the text: Melchizedek's function as commander of the angelic army, and the fact that his actions and responsibilities exceed those of traditional human anointed figures. An example of this is the role that Melchizedek plays as an eschatological liberator of the elect *Sons of Light* (l. 4–6). He not only proclaims their liberty, as the anointed one in Isa 61 is limited to doing, but also actively sets the elect free—an action normally associated with God (as in Deut 30:3; Ps 53:7). In addition, the *Sons of Light* are described as part of the *lot* (or *inheritance*) *of Melchizedek* (and as *the Sons of Heaven* through the parallel in l. 5).[217] Although there is no direct mention of Melchizedek serving in a priestly role, it seems plausible that the figure was viewed as having priestly functions, both from the context, its actions,

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make the final atonement sacrifice at the end of the tenth Jubilee. Melchizedek was "born" in the holy of holies among the holy ones (Ps. 110, LXX Ps. 104)" (ibid., 71).

[214] Hannah, *Michael*, 70.

[215] Cf. Aschim, "Melchizedek", 135; van de Water, "Michael", 78.

[216] As van der Woude, "Melchisedek als himmlische Erlösergestalt", argued in the original publication of the text (followed by most scholars since, e.g., Vermes *Complete*, 500), he saw Melchizedek as identical to Michael, and the titles to refer to Melchizedek as the judge presiding at the condemnation of Belial; cf. Michael Mach, "Angels", in EDSS (ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 26.

[217] Cf. Kobelski, *Melchizedek*, 5; Hannah, *Michael*, 70; Milik, "Milkî-sedek", 97, has disagreed with this reconstruction, and reads instead "in the lot of Melchizedek". Milik's suggested reconstruction of 2 l. 8, with angels instead of light, would mean that the text refers to the angels included in the lot of Melchizedek, rather than to the elect of humanity (ibid., 98). Milik thus avoids the repetitious description of two groups of men included in the lot of Melchizedek. This reading results in an intriguing situation, in which Melchizedek commands both a select group of men (the *Sons of Light*) and a group of angels—although the idea that angels would be the subject of atonement is sufficiently uncharacteristic of Second Temple texts that it would appear more likely that 11Q13 describes two parts of humanity who, because of Melchizedek's intercession, will be saved.

and from the possible influences of Gen 14, Psalm 110, and *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*. This role may have appeared so self-evident to the author that it was felt unnecessary to mention; it may also be a detail contained in the damaged parts of the text.[218]

This angelic Melchizedek is described as the one who will liberate the righteous from *the debts of their iniquities* during the first week of the last Jubilee, and proclaim their freedom (l. 6). At the end of this Jubilee, the Day of Atonement will arrive and *atonement shall be made for all the sons of [light and for] the men [of] the lot of Mel[chi]zedek* (l. 8). This period of time is described as *the time for the year of grace of Melchizedek and of [his] arm[ies, the nati]on [of] the holy ones of God* (l. 9). The use of quotations from the *songs of David* (Ps 82:1–2; 7:8–9) in l. 10–11, 11Q13 describes the coming judgment (l. 9) of the unjust nations. This *administration of justice* will be conducted by Melchizedek, with the assistance of an angelic army constituting *all the gods of justice* and *all the sons of God* (l. 13–14). 11Q13 l. 15–25 continues the description of Melchizedek's actions during and after the final Jubilee, emphasizing Melchizedek as the messenger of peace and salvation. His future role will be to arrive a second time, at the end of the seven weeks, to inaugurate a period in which he will *comfort the afflicted* and *instruct them in all the ages of the world* (l. 18–20). The author responsible for 11Q13 describes a final battle, after certain victory in which Melchizedek, as commander of God's forces (both angelic and human), will administer God's justice upon his enemies: Belial and those belonging to his lot.[219] The retribution that Melchizedek shall exact upon Belial is further described in l. 13: *Melchizedek will exact ven[geance] of E[l's] judgments [and he will protect all the sons of light from the power] of Belial and from the power of all [the spirits of] his [lot]*.

This Belial (בליעל) thus serves as an antithetical figure to Melchizedek: God entrusts Melchizedek with the vengeance that will ultimately befall Belial and those of his lot.[220] While there is no clear demonology in 11Q13,

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[218] Cf. van der Woude, "Melchisedek", 358; Fitzmyer, "Further Light", 259; Frans du Toit Laubscher, "God's Angel of Truth and Melchizedek. A Note on 11QMelch 13b", *JSJ* 3 (1972): 51; Kobelski, *Melchizedek*, 57–59, 64; Aschim, "Melchizedek", 139; van de Water, "Michael", 80.

[219] Cf. Adam S. van der Woude and Marinus de Jonge, "11Q Melchizedek and the New Testament", *NTS* 12 (1965): 301; van der Woude, "Melchisedek", 365; Jean Carmignac, "Le document de Qumran sur Melchisédeq" *RevQ* 7 (1970): 366; Laubscher, "God's Angel", 50.

[220] On Belial, see Benedikt Otzen, "Beliyya'al", in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1975), 2:136, who provides the following description of Belial: "the prince of this world, the leader of the children of darkness in the war against the children of light and the tempter".

this name situates the text within a larger tradition. Within the multitude of demons mentioned in the Qumran texts, two figures recur: Mastemah and Belial. The two names at times appear to be interchangeable and functionally identical, together with the *Angel of Darkness* (1QM 13 l. 10–12 and CD 4 l. 26) and the *prince of wickedness* (1QM 17 l. 5–6).[221] Belial is mentioned in Hebrew Scripture twenty-seven times, primarily in connection with death, chaos, and similar antisocial activities (for example, Ps 18:5; 2 Sam 20:1; 22:5), but never as a personal being.[222] This is not the case in the Qumran texts, where Belial functions as one of the main antagonists within the dualistic cosmology (see, for example, 1QM 13 l. 10–15, where we also learn that God created Belial in order to tempt or corrupt mankind). He is the one who fights against the Angel of Light (and the various names associated with this figure), and is a constant threat to the faithful community.[223]

In addition to using the Melchizedek figure as the named version of the generic Angel of Light figure, 11Q13 includes aspects that may be taken as describing Melchizedek as a god. For example, Melchizedek is the recipient of the Isa 52:7 reference in l. 16 (*Your God [is king]*).[224] According to this interpretation, the Melchizedek who returns from heaven in l. 10–11 was a god to *the establishers of the covenant* (l. 24). Rather than taking this as a surprising break with the theology of the Qumran community (assuming that the text was indeed composed at Qumran), we can assume that this description is an example of the practice found elsewhere in the Qumran writings, by which similar eschatological agents could be interpreted as being ascribed divinity. Such descriptions in fact illustrate these beings' exalted positions within the host of God. An illustrative example is Michael, whom God is said to *raise amongst the gods*, according to 1QM 17 l. 7b.[225]

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[221] Cf. Michael Mach, "Demons", in EDSS (ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 190.
[222] Cf. Davidson, *Angels*, 162.
[223] Cf. Mach, "Demons", 190-191.
[224] That this refers to Melchizedek may be inferred from 2 l. 24–25, in which Elohim is explained; this would not be necessary if it referred to Yahweh; cf. Kobelski, *Melchizedek*, 72; Horton, *Melchizedek*, 75; Hannah, *Michael*, 71–72; According to several scholars, e.g., Puech, "Notes", 499–500; van de Water, "Michael", 81, and Fitzmyer, "Further Light", 40, the anointed herald mentioned in 2.15–16 is based on Isa 52.7, Isa 61.3, and Dan 9.25, and should be interpreted as also being a reference to Melchizedek. If so, this would ascribe a prophetic role to the exalted Melchizedek. For a critique of this interpretation, see van der Woude, "Melchisedek", 367; Milik, "Milkî-sedek", 126; and Puech, "Notes", 513.
[225] Cf. Hannah, *Michael*, 72.

3.7.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in 11Q13

This Qumran production from ca. the second or first century B.C.E. presents a text in which Melchizedek is an angelic being who serves God as both commander and priest. Melchizedek also appears instrumental in winning the eschatological war against the opponents of God. After this victory, the Melchizedek figure is responsible for establishing, or ruling during, a time of peace. Melchizedek here is the viceroy of God, serving as the guardian angel who defends the righteous (his lot) before, during, and after the eschatological war. In 11Q13, Melchizedek thus serves as the one who is "liberating, judging, avenging and ruling".[226]

An interesting aspect of this is that, although the text interprets several passages from Hebrew Scripture, it does not deal with either Gen 14 or Psalm 110.[227] Based on shared content, worldview, and purpose, it seems that the primary influence on 11Q13 was a tradition similar to that found in *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*. While Melchizedek may presumably have been a priest in 11Q13, his primary function is as the exalted defender of the righteous community. Rather than being merely the chosen priest (as in *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*), the Melchizedek figure of 11Q13 has taken on both priestly and royal functions, and has thus become the principle being for the community responsible for the text. This being enabled the author to establish a superior theology through this viceroy of God—a "national" angel. Thus, 11Q13 and *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* are early texts in the exalted category of interpretation: they present exalted Melchizedek figures as a central part of a superior sectarian priesthood. These versions of the figure, although differing in particulars, share a number of significant traits that testify to a theological connection between the texts.[228] Within *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and 11Q13, we see a Melchizedek figure who has shed his human skin and been transformed into an angel. The primary characteristic of this angelomorphic Melchizedek recurs in both texts: his responsibilities are towards the righteous community, to whom he serves as priest, teacher, and past,

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[226] van de Water, "Michael", 80.

[227] Although Kobelski, *Melchizedek*, 52, suggests that the inspiration behind Melchizedek liberating his lot is from the Genesis account of the liberation of Lot by Abraham; According to Carsten Colpe, "Heidnische, jüdische und christliche Überlieferung in den Schriften aus Nag Hammadi IX", in *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 23, 1980, 114–115, it was rather the Psalm 110 references to warfare and judgment that were transformed into the background of the Melchizedek figure in 11Q13. Both suggestions are plausible, yet it would appear more likely that these functions came from the numerous exalted-angel traditions contemporary with 11Q13.

[228] Cf., e.g., Davidson, *Angels*, 140.

present, and future defender. As the general of the angelic forces, he is at the forefront of the eschatological war—a confrontation his forces will win, thereby providing the righteous with a time of peace. He serves as high priest in heaven, where he leads the hosts of angels in prayer and service in the heavenly temple.

These initial examples of an exalted Melchizedek illustrate the existence of several related traditions focusing on the priestly and guardian aspects of the figure. These traditions were apparently favoured by several sectarian communities who had comparable theological agendas. The texts share a sufficient amount of material to permit the conclusion that both may have been dependent upon an earlier tradition in which the initial stages of the exaltation of Melchizedek had begun. 11Q13 may thus represent the Qumran exegetes' attempts to adapt the role and attributes of the Melchizedek from *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (or a similar tradition) to their specific theological purpose.

3.8 Melchizedek at Qumran

The preceding analysis of the Melchizedek traditions has identified an interesting shift: whereas the earlier texts (Gen 14, Pseudo-Eupolemus, and *Genesis Apocryphon*) all used the figure primarily to extol Abraham (or an unnamed king in Ps 110), the tradition represented by *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and 11Q13 presents a decisive focus on an exalted Melchizedek (for reasons already discussed, we will in the sequel consider the occurrence of Melchizedek in 11Q13 as certain and in *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* as highly plausible, whereas 4Qʿ Amram and 4Q246 will be used only as circumstantial evidence). Based on our analysis of these texts in the preceding chapters, we are now in a position to provide plausible answers to the questions invited by this transition. The foremost of these considers why we have transitioned from *Abraham-centric* texts to texts in which the figure of Abraham has disappeared, and which describe instead an exalted priestly Melchizedek. In addition, we will need to address the question of how this sudden exegetical bloom grew out of traditions that had only a superficial interest in the Melchizedek figure.

The first question concerns the date and location at which the tradition began. Unfortunately, no copies of Gen 14:18–20 or Ps 110:4 have thus far been uncovered at Qumran, and so we cannot state whether any traits of an

exalted Melchizedek figured in the community's version of these texts.[229] Yet it is remarkable that, although both our texts make extensive use of Hebrew Scripture, neither quote directly (based on the surviving text) from Gen 14:18–20 or Ps 110:4. This could indicate that these passages did not influence the later exalted tradition, but we should be hesitant in drawing this conclusion, as material from Gen 14 and Psalm 110 may have been used in passages now lost, or may have been so fundamental to both author and audience that there was no need to quote directly from them. On the other hand, the (surviving) narrative elements from Gen 14:18–20 are so few, giving only the Melchizedek figure's name and basic functions as leader and priest, that the notion of *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and 11Q13 primarily being rewritings of these texts would make them exceptionally "centrifugal" examples of this exegetical activity.[230]

The exegetical work present within *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and 11Q13 situate the exalted figure within a larger tradition of exalted humans and angels. Although the authors were presumably familiar with the human Melchizedek presented by Gen 14:18–20 (and the *Genesis Apocryphon*), they apparently had no problem exalting this figure to angelic status—a process comparable to the way other sectarian communities were exalting the figures of Enoch, Adam, Noah, and other figures from Scripture. The specific attributes and actions associated with the Melchizedek figure are all elements shared with other exalted angelic figures mentioned in contemporary sectarian texts (such as the Angel of Light and Michael). The angelic development within these texts may have been influenced by pre-Qumran texts and by the apocalyptic traditions found in the *Aramaic Testament of Levi*, parts of *1 Enoch*, and *Jubilees*.[231] This illustrates well how a tradition associated with a specific angel could, through the application of a new name, be appropriated by a different community and adapted to suit their theological purpose.

These exalted angelic beings appear as interchangeable entities who, under different names, at different times, and in different texts, perform comparable actions.[232] As Dupont-Sommer noted at the beginning of

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[229] Cf. Eugene Ulrich, "The Biblical Texts from the Judean Desert. 2. Index of Passages in the 'Biblical Texts'", in *The Texts from the Judaean Desert: Indices and an Introduction to the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert Series* (DJD XXXIV; ed. Emanuel Tov, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 185; 198.

[230] Cf. the term used by Alexander, "Retelling", 117, to describe texts that "take as their starting point a single episode of the Bible, or a very short passage, and expand it almost beyond recognition".

[231] Cf. Charlesworth et al., *Angelic Liturgy*, 9–10; Hannah, *Michael*, 25.

[232] What Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Fortress Press, 1988), 21, calls "the basic idea that there is a chief agent who has been assigned a unique status among all other servants of God". The attempts at pinning down these angelic beings serve only the

Qumranology, it seems common for the same "supernatural personage" to carry different names and designations, depending on the specific circumstances of the text in question.[233] While it would be injudicious to equate all exalted angels or to state that, for instance, the figures of Michael and Melchizedek are always completely interchangeable in sectarian writings,[234] the surviving traditions often reveal a consistent and shared theology attributed to these entities, according to which the exalted being is appointed by God as an intermediary to a righteous community (the sect responsible for the text) as their guardian angel, and is entrusted with a range of important duties both in the present and in the future eschatological conflict. These responsibilities include serving as the general of the celestial army, often fulfilling various priestly obligations, and functioning as the heavenly redeemer. The central aspect, as identified by Hurtado, is that this principal angel has "been placed by God in a position of unequalled power and honour, making the figure second only to God in rank". [235] These are attributes similar to those we have found for Melchizedek in *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and 11Q13, which allows us to include the figure among the ranks of these exalted beings.[236]

The origin of the exalted-angel tradition is difficult to pinpoint, but we may suggest that this divine champion began as a metaphor of God's power, later developing into personified attributes or hypostases, and finally becoming fully separate, individually named beings.[237] This "theological evolution" could have been caused by the development from polytheism to monotheism, in which angels, as interpolations between God and humanity, increased in importance as God's direct involvement in creation was

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"mostly modern needs for systematizing an otherwise quite unsystematic literature" and "it seems clear that angels might have had more than one name at a time"; Mach, "Angels", 25-26.

[233] André Dupont-Sommer, *Nouveaux aperçus sur les manuscrits de la Mer Morte* (L'orient ancien illustré 5; Paris: Maisonneuve, 1953).

[234] As Hannah, *Michael*, 75, seems to prefer.

[235] Hurtado, *One God*, 75.

[236] Similarly to the conclusion of Campbell, *Exegetical Texts*, 56, that the exalted Melchizedek was, in many ways, "a hybrid of the elusive character from Genesis 14.18–20 and Psalm 110.4, on the one hand, and the supernatural personage appearing in a number of other Qumran writings who is variously called Prince of Light (e.g., 1QS 3.29), the Angel of Truth (4QCatena A 4.12), and the archangel Michael (1QM 17.5–8) on the other".

[237] Cf. van der Woude and Jonge, "11Q Melchizedek", 368–372; Émile Puech, *La croyance des Esséniens en la vie future: Immortalité, réssurrection, vie éternelle? Histoire d'une croyance dans le Judaïsme ancien I–II* (Études Bibliques N.S. 20–21 Paris: Libraire Lecoffre, 1993), II:535–536; 548–50; Joseph M. Baumgarten, "The Heavenly Tribunal and the Personification of Sedeq in Jewish Apocalyptic", *ANRW* II: 19.1 (1979): 222–225; Aschim, "Melchizedek", 133; 245; García Martínez, "Eschatological Figure", 173; Davidson, *Angels*, 263.

believed to diminish.[238] What the sectarian texts show is the increasing focus on angels.[239] This interest is perhaps best exemplified by the vast numbers used in *1 En*. 1.7 (*ten million holy ones*). Although these angels were cast in many shapes and had many purposes, at the centre of most angelologies there was a shared tradition of one exalted angel above the others, whether this individual was called the Angel of Light, Michael, or, as in our texts, Melchizedek. It appears plausible that the Melchizedek figure in the traditions presented by *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and 11Q13 owes more to such a "supernatural personage" than to Gen 14 and Psalm 110, with which they share only the name and the role of priest-king. The Scriptural background may have provided the name and importance to a figure whose role became what has best been characterized by Woude's early description: a "himmlische Erlösergestalt".[240]

It thus appears plausible that, at some point in time, a pre-Qumran community merged Melchizedek with the exalted-angel tradition, similarly to what happened with other figures from Scripture. *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and 11Q13 thereby constitute the surviving evidence of a larger Melchizedek tradition, in which the figure became increasingly important. Yet as our texts represent the only surviving evidence of this Melchizedekian tradition, its early stages remain in the realm of conjecture. Instead, we will now address the questions of what theological purposes were served by this exegetical development, and why was the Melchizedek figure chosen from the long list of potential figures in Hebrew Scripture. We will review in the following two hypotheses suggested in recent years, and propose two new ones that may provide answers to the questions.

The first possibility is based on the name *Melchiresha*, which is used for the "villain" in a limited number of texts (4Q280, 4Q286, 4Qʿ Amram, and 11Q13), some of which predate the texts containing the Melchizedek figure.[241] It would appear to be a logical development that, at some point,

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[238] Cf., e.g., Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 149–166; Matthias Köckert, "Divine Messengers and Mysterious Men in the Patriarchal Narratives of the Book of Genesis", in *The Concept of Celestial Beings: Origins, Development and Reception* (Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook; ed. Friedrich V. Reiterer et al.; Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 75: "We cannot dispute that the popularity of "angels" increases when the experience of a transcendent God grows"..

[239] Cf. Randall C. Gleason, "Angels and the Eschatology of Heb 1–2", *NTS* 49 (2003): 101–102.

[240] van der Woude, "Melchisedek".

[241] 4Q286 was composed during the late 2nd century B.C.E., according to Milik, "Milkî-sedek", 134–135. 4Qʿ Amram—given that the evidence of Melchizedek in this text is highly speculative—may provide another example of a Melchiresha without Melchizedek, predating 11Q13.

the figure of Melchizedek would have been chosen as Melchiresha's etymological counterpart and antithetical parallel. This hypothesis would thus exalt the figure, as the Melchizedek name pointed to the logical defender against this personified and named force of darkness. Yet the passages where the figures of Melchiresha and Melchizedek appear together are either uncertain (as in 4Qʿ Amram) or younger than *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*; they would thus be later than the first testimony of an exalted Melchizedek.

The second hypothesis, as suggested by Tantlevskij in 2003,[242] is based on a possible connection between Melchizedek and the elusive figure of the *Teacher of Righteousness* (מורה הצדק). The figure appears in several sectarian texts, including the *Damascus Document*, 1QpHab, 4Q171, 4Q173, and 1Q14. According to these texts, the Teacher was central in establishing a sectarian group (see, for example, 4Q171 3 15–17) as a result of a conflict against another figure, variously described as the *Scoffer* (*Damascus Document* 1 14), the *Liar* (1QpHab 2 1–3), and the *Wicked Priest* (1QpHab 9 4–8).[243] The Teacher is described as the community's priest—probably their first "high priest"[244]—and because of his actions, his followers will be saved *because of their suffering and their faithfulness* (1QpHab 8 2).[245]

Tantlevskij identifies several similarities between the Teacher and Melchizedek: both were described as teachers, as priests, as being responsible (in different ways) for the community of the righteous, as playing an active part in the eschatological events, and having adversaries with names invoking similar concepts (Melchiresha and the Wicked Priest). Tantlevskij suggested that the similarities exist because the sectarians believed Melchizedek to have been a historical figure who became the Teacher of Righteousness after his death, and who would return to save the community as its Messiah (in 4Q521, 4Q246, and other texts, according to Tantlevskij's interpretation).[246] According to Tantlevskij, this hypothesis explains why the community included Melchizedek in their texts: he was

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[242] Igor R. Tantlevskij, "Melchizedek and the Teacher of Righteousness: Some Peculiarities of Messianic and Eschatological Texts from Qumran", *Manuscripta Orientalia: International Journal for Oriental Manuscript Research* 9:1 (2003): 26–53.

[243] While both the Teacher and the Wicked Priest have been identified with several historic personalities (ranging from the high priest Jonathan to Jesus), these attributions remain hypothetical and debated; cf. Michael A. Knibb, "Teacher of Righteousness", in EDSS (ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2:919. According to Alexander, *Mystical Texts*, 49, "The Teacher of Righteousness was probably effectively the first Maskil, though he may not actually have carried that title, perhaps to set him apart from subsequent Maskilim".

[244] Cf. Knibb, "Teacher of Righteousness", 2:921.

[245] Cf. ibid., 2:919–920.

[246] Tantlevskij, "Melchizedek", 29–31, 37.

believed to be the eternal, angelomorphic Teacher of Righteousness. Unfortunately for this hypothesis, nowhere in the Qumran texts do we find any mention of any connection between Melchizedek and the Teacher. In addition, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* provides plausible evidence of Melchizedek's exaltation earlier than 11Q13, and there are no clear indications that the Teacher was described as having undergone such an angelomorphic transformation.

A related hypothesis is that the name *Melchizedek* may itself have led to the initial exaltation of the figure: a priest-king whose name included the element *righteous* might well have struck a chord with the Qumran community, who are believed to have designated themselves the *sons of righteousness* (cf. 1QS 3 20).[247] Yet this does not explain why the figure had already been modified by the time it arrived at Qumran (for example, in *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*), and we do not know whether or not those responsible for the initial exaltation of the Melchizedek figure described themselves in this way.

A third hypothesis as to why the figure of Melchizedek flourished within the Qumran sect has recently been forwarded by Bertalotto.[248] This suggestion focuses upon the perceived messianic associations of Melchizedek, and interprets the figure as a sectarian adaptation of the *one like a son of man* from Dan 7:13–14. According to Bertalotto, the development can be traced from the interpretation of the *Son of Man* in the *Book of Parables*, through the *Son of God* in 4Q246 (as an early interpretation of the vision in Dan 7 and the Enochian tradition), to the Melchizedek in 11Q13.[249] 11Q13 would thus present the Qumran sectarians' new Messiah figure, influenced by Enochian traditions that caused them to abandon some messianic elements and to rewrite others, with Melchizedek as the new Messiah.[250] This "intriguing exception", as

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[247] Cf. Hannah, *Michael*, 73–74, who finds that "It is not hard to imagine why the covenanters were attracted to the name Melchizedek"; He suggests that the reason for this attraction was that the name was interpreted as a title. The figure's frequent reappearance "provides evidence for ancient, widespread and varied speculation about this mysterious priest-king"; Davidson, *Angels*, 264, also favours a reason based on the etymology of Melchizedek (as "righteous king"), connected with the theme of judgment and the righteous rule of God that Melchizedek was expected to bring.

[248] Pierpaolo Bertalotto, "Qumran Messianism, Melchizedek, and the Son of Man", in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Context: Integrating the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Study of Ancient Texts, Languages, and Cultures* (VTSup 140:1; ed. Armin Lange, Emanuel Tov, and Matthias Weigold; Leiden: Brill, 2011): 325–339; Margaret Barker, *The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 71, argued somewhat similarly, that Melchizedek was considered a Messiah at Qumran.

[249] Bertalotto, "Qumran Messianism", 332–333; cf. John J. Collins, "The Background of the 'Son of God' Text", *BBR* (1997): 51–62.

[250] Bertalotto, "Qumran Messianism", 339: "[11Q13] was created by the sectarians against the background of the latter [the Enochic Son of Man], with the purpose of

Bertalotto describes it, to the dominant Qumran Messiah theology (namely, the Davidic Prince of the Congregation and his war against the Kittim in 4Q161 2 11–25) would have combined royal and priestly Messiahs in a single exalted figure, made possible by Melchizedek's function as priest-king in Gen 14:18–20.[251]

Bertalotto's "Messianic Melchizedek" argument provides a possible explanation for why the Qumran exegetes chose the Melchizedek figure, but there are certain elements that should give us pause. While we can agree that the Melchizedek figure was held in high regard by some of the sectarian exegetes, Bertalotto's extraordinary claim that Melchizedek became an exclusive Messiah, and in effect superseded much earlier sectarian theology, would require extraordinary proof.[252] Yet, the texts lack any direct indication of a Messianic Melchizedek. Not only does the term itself not appear, but neither do the words *anointed* or *Messiah* appear in a context where we could plausibly identify the appearance of the Melchizedek figure. In addition, there is a problem with the chronology: much of the exegetical manoeuvring that led to an exalted Melchizedek, as discussed above, apparently occurred *before* the composition of 11Q13, which would make the exalted Melchizedek earlier than suggested by Bertalotto. The difficulties of dating 4Q246, with its Son of God reference, means that this text could be contemporary with, or younger than, 11Q13, which would also disrupt the chronology of Bertalotto's hypothesis. While these elements may hinder our acceptance of the "Melchizedek Messiah" hypothesis, one important contribution of Bertalotto's work is its emphasis on the creative exegetical forces behind these texts, and on how the Enochian traditions may have influenced the exalted Melchizedek figure. This we now discuss in greater detail.

The fourth hypothesis combines elements of the previous three with a central focus on the priestly aspects of the Melchizedek figure. We argue that the figure in *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and 11Q13 presents too high a level of sophistication to be merely a rewriting of Gen 14:18–20, or to be the product of spontaneous exegetical impulse. Instead, this Melchizedek figure presents a deliberate theological rewriting that exalts Melchizedek with the aim of positioning the priesthood associated with the figure above the established Levitical priesthood.[253] Although we cannot be

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harmonizing the new messianic figure with some other well received non-sectarian ideas".

[251] Ibid., 330.

[252] To paraphrase Marcello Truzzi's famous phrase "An extraordinary claim requires extraordinary proof", from "On the Extraordinary: An Attempt at Clarification", in *Zetetic Scholar*, 1:1, (1978): 11.

[253] Kobelski, *Melchizedek*, 71, also concluded (by different means) that Melchizedek was used by the Qumran exegetes because of his priestly associations.

certain about when or where the exalted Melchizedek was developed, or about who its theological midwives were, we can assume that they were well-organized and exhibited a strong focus on the role of priests and priesthood. They also appear to have been influenced by the evolving angelologies from the Enochian and other contemporary traditions, and in particular by the increasingly important priestly functions of the exalted beings in these traditions. In order to discuss why this tradition was created and how it may have made its way to the Qumran library, we will now address the Enochian traditions and their role in this process.

The definition of the "Qumran sect" used in the preceding chapters closely follows that of the "Groningen Hypothesis" (in itself a development of the "Essene Hypothesis"). [254] This hypothesis remains the most compelling (and, arguably, the most widely accepted) explanation of the origin of the Qumran sect and the makeup of the manuscripts they amassed. The hypothesis argues that the Qumran sect was founded when it separated itself from the main Essene sect. Thus, it should not be equated with the Essenes but was a splinter group seceded from its parent. The conditions leading up to this sectarian "parting of the ways" has been further developed by Boccaccini in his *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*. [255] Boccaccini focuses on the complex question of how this bifurcation may have occurred. Boccaccini suggests that the Essene movement arose in opposition to the Zadokite priesthood, because they claimed "to represent a competing (and more ancient) priestly line", as indicated by early Enochian writings (such as the *Book of the Watchers*, and *Astronomical Book*).[256] A primary catalyst for this dissent was a belief that the Jerusalem Temple was no longer legitimate. This stance won the movement adherents during the Maccabean crisis and afterwards became the "center of a vast and composite movement that aimed to replace the Zadokite leadership" during the rule of the Hasmoneans.[257] Their hopes (which Boccaccini argues are reflected in *Jubilees* and the *Temple Scroll*) met with disappointment, causing a group, the Enochians, to fully separate themselves (and thereby becoming the Essenes described by Philo and Josephus).

For a minority the degree of separation was not sufficient and their further separation resulted in the Qumran sect. The characteristic Enochian belief in a superhuman origin of evil was at the forefront of the theological

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[254] Cf. Florentino Garciá Martínez and Adam S. van der Woude, "A Groningen Hypothesis of Qumran Origins and Early History", *RevQ* 14 (1990): 521–541; Johann Maier, *Zwischen den Testamenten: Geschichte und Religion in der Zeit des Zweiten Tempels: Die neue echter Bibel: Ergänzungsband zum alten Testament, Bd. 3* (Würzburg: Echter, 1990).
[255] Boccaccini, *Beyond*.
[256] Ibid., 185.
[257] Ibid., 185–191.

schism; the Enochian focus on the individual's responsibility to do good (as expressed by the *Epistle of Enoch* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*), was opposed by the Qumran sect who emphasized the concept of predestination (that is, it mattered less what you *did*, more what you were born *as*).[258] Boccaccini's "Enochic/Essene Hypothesis" in many aspects follows the "Essene Hypothesis" (that the community was dependent upon Essenism) and the "Groningen Hypothesis" (that the community was an independent, marginal group that through a theological schism had further isolated itself), but, by focusing on the Enochian connections, provides a plausible answer to the how and why of the specific origin of the Qumran community.

The "Enochic/Essene Hypothesis" also emphasizes how each of these sectarian splinterings resulted in new priesthoods. The Enochians shared priestly roots with the Zadokites, yet when they abandoned this priesthood, they established their own "Enochian" priesthood, believed to be purer than the alternative.[259] Largely disdaining the Mosaic Torah and the Temple, the Enochian priesthood was based upon the increasingly exalted Enoch figure, and from the priestly associations ascribed to him, their priesthood was argued superior as antediluvian (and thereby, pre-Zadokite), pure, and divinely sanctioned.[260]

And this is where Melchizedek once again enters the argument. We will now bring Boccaccini's "Enochic/Essene Hypothesis" a step further, in an attempt to provide a plausible origin for the Melchizedek priesthood found in 11Q13. Repeating the Enochian rejection of the Zadokite priesthood, those who were to become the Qumran community parted ways under the influence of leaders who sought to establish a priesthood of their own. Their beliefs included a more dominant dualism, a superhuman origin of evil, and an individual predestination contrary to Enochian beliefs. They thus regarded the Enochian priesthood as wrong, and would have no longer focused their hopes on that priesthood (mirroring how the Enochians forsook the Zadokite priesthood). Instead, they would have searched for a new theological foundation for their own priesthood. This theological quest explains the focus in the sectarian writings on defining the role of the priest and the priesthood within the community—a focus that may have resulted

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[258] Ibid., 62–64. The anti-Enochian elements of this hypothesis may also explain why there appears to have been a disinterest in contemporary Enochian literature. The reason why some late Enochian literature (e.g., the *Similitudes of Enoch*) has not been found at Qumran is that, having established their own priesthood, the Qumran community had no interest in these theological developments; cf. ibid., 130. This also explains, in a way, why postsectarian Enochian writings (i.e., the *Epistle of Enoch*, *Similitudes of Enoch*, and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*) have specifically anti-Qumranic elements.

[259] Ibid., 71–79.

[260] Ibid., 72–74.

in the redefinition of the sect's priesthood on the basis of a figure that provided the sectarians with an intrinsic counterargument to the claims of the Enochian priesthood; the Melchizedek figure could be proven to be the earliest priesthood (according to Gen 14:18–20), and one that was untainted by Zadokite or Enochian theology. In addition, because of the exegetical developments that had already led to the exalted attributes of the figure, the new celestial high priest, Melchizedek, would have provided the sect with its own "guardian angel"—important for their belief in a superhuman cause of all evil. This "defender of the righteous" would, according to the tradition already evidenced by *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, have provided the community with a celestial intermediary figure, and would thus correspond well with the sect's belief in an individual predeterminism, according to which only those preordained to belong to the "lot of Melchizedek" would be saved. This also provides the reason for the focus on the figure of Melchizedek: in 11Q13, the authors established the heavenly redeemer Melchizedek, provided to them by other texts, such as *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, as the origin of their pure, divinely guaranteed priesthood. As the Enochian priesthood had grown out of the opposition to the Zadokite priesthood, so the Qumran priesthoods emerged from opposition to the Enochian priesthood, and 11Q13 thus represents one theological answer, in accordance with which some of the Qumran exegetes sought to establish a priesthood of their own based on the exalted Melchizedek.

According to this hypothesis, the initial exegesis on the Melchizedek figure was not the work of exegetes from Qumran, but from another, in many ways similar, community that inserted the figure into the growing exalted-angel traditions. Why they did so is now lost in the fog of history, but a plausible answer is that a contemporary increasing focus on the priestly roles of the angels may have made the first priest mentioned in Hebrew Scripture an ideal candidate for recasting as a high-priestly angel. A priesthood that could claim descent from an exalted Melchizedek would have provided a sectarian community with a fresh, unspoiled priesthood that had verifiably ancient roots. These reasons may be similar to those that led members of the Qumran community to later accept and further enhance this theology in 11Q13. The theological developments in the Melchizedek figure testified to by the texts provide us with an insight into how Scriptural figures may have been rewritten ("centrifugally") with very specific theological purposes in mind. Yet it also emphasizes the existence of several different (albeit related) traditions that feature modified Melchizedeks, and illustrates the potential provided by the Melchizedek figure to exegetes. The figure of Melchizedek constituted an ideal basis upon which to establish a new priesthood, and one that could be demonstrated through Scripture to be superior to the established priesthood

of the *Anstalt*—at the time, the Levitical priesthood. This very potential and its varied uses will be encountered multiple times in the following chapters, as we investigate the way in which later texts reappropriate the Melchizedek figure to establish new priesthoods in opposition to the *Anstalt* of their time.

3.9 Philo of Alexandria

3.9.1 Introduction to Philo

Philo of Alexandria (ca. 25–10 B.C.E. to 45–50 C.E.) represents our next sortie into ancient authors and their use of the Melchizedek figure.[261] Philo, a very prolific writer whose textual legacy consists of some forty treatises, employs the figure four times, in four different writings, to four different purposes. In two of these texts, the priest-king of Salem is mentioned directly by his proper name (*Congr.* 98–99 and *Leg.* 3.79–82), while in another passage, Philo's description leaves no doubt who he is referring to (*Abr.* 235). In the fourth passage, Philo describes the gifts exchanged during a meeting—apparently the encounter between Abraham and Melchizedek. In the following, we will review each of these occurrences and their use of the figure of Melchizedek to arrive at an understanding of Philo's interpretation, intent, and purpose in using the figure. In one of his writings, Philo characterizes Melchizedek as *Logos.* This necessitates an exploration of this term to clarify what Philo may have meant by it, muddled as it is by its 1,300 or so appearances in Philo's writings.[262]

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[261] The suggested dates are largely assumptions on the basis of Philo's comment (*Legat.* 1.182) that he was an old man in about 42–43. Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 3, suggests ca. 25–20 B.C.E. to 50 C.E.; Daniel R. Schwartz, "Philo, His Family, and His Times", in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (ed. Adam Kamesar; Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 10, favours ca. 20–10 B.C.E. to 50 C.E.; and Adam Kamesar, "Introduction", in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (ed. Adam Kamesar; Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1, prefers ca. 15 B.C.E. to 45 C.E. The internal chronology of Philo's writings remains an unsolved problem, primarily due to the few remarks offered by Philo himself on this. James R. Royse, "The Works of Philo", in *Cambridge Companion Philo* (ed. Adam Kamesar; Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 59–62, provides an overview of attempts to reconstruct the correct sequence.

[262] According to the calculations of Longenecker, "Melchizedek", 171.

Philo was a wealthy, well-educated Hellenized Jew based in the metropolis of Alexandria.[263] Writing in Greek, he used the Septuagint as the basis of his exegetical endeavours, which were focused on describing the ascent of the individual soul (entitled *the allegory of the soul* in *Praem.* 158).[264] Philo's interpretation of Judaism was distinctly different from that preserved by later rabbinic literature—his focus on the laws was not on account of his regard for them as an end in themselves, but rather because he considered them a means of obtaining the greatest experience available to mankind: the mystic communion with God.[265] It is through his extensive use of allegories that Philo interprets and explains the content of the Judaic writings for his intended audience according to a "Grand Allegory", in which "all fits together and fits together neatly".[266] Philo's allegorical method builds on the understanding that Scripture contains two layers of meaning: a *literal* (ῥητή or *obvious* (φανερά)) meaning and an *underlying* (υπόνοια or *hidden*) meaning. Philo allegorizes by interpreting these underlying meanings of Scripture (said to be *obscured to the many* (*Abr.* 36.200) as something one needs to be *initiated into* to fully grasp (*Fug.* 32.179)), and does so with few limitations.[267] Because Moses *did not employ any superfluous words* (*Fug.* 54), Philo views each name, number,

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[263] Cf. Sandmel, *Philo*, 117, and Schwartz, "Philo", 9–10; 12–14. There are certain indications that Philo was of priestly descent (e.g., his remarks in *Spec.* 1.124); cf. Daniel R. Schwartz, "Philo's Priestly Descent", in *Nourished with Peace: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism in Memory of Samuel Sandmel* (ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn, Earle Hilgert, and Burton L. Mack; Chico, Calif.: Scholars' Press, 1984), 155–171.

[264] Although Philo wrote exclusively in Greek (judging from what has survived), some scholars, e.g., Sandmel, *Philo*, 11–12, have argued that Philo knew Hebrew well, on the basis of his expositions of the etymology of the names used in Hebrew Scripture. Other scholars, among them Adam Kamesar, "Biblical Interpretation in Philo", in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 70–72, have argued that this type of knowledge may instead be based on Philo's use of preexisting onomastica, whose occurrence and use are well-attested in later centuries. If so, we have little data to identify whether Philo was familiar with Hebrew or Aramaic. Philo's quotations from Scripture indicate that he used the LXX as the basis of his work (there are a few exceptions to this; e.g., Virt. 30.164); cf. Harry A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947), 90, Royse, "Philo", 33, and Kamesar, "Philo", 70–72.

[265] Cf. Sandmel, *Philo*, 82. However, Philo's description of the Jewish people as "the race which is able to see God" in *Migr.* 18, indicates that he only regarded this possible for Jews; cf. Gerhard Delling, "The 'One Who Sees God' in Philo", in *Nourished with Peace: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism in Memory of Samuel Sandmel* (ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn, Earle Hilgert, and Burton L. Mack; Chico, Calif.: Scholars' Press, 1984), 30–31.

[266] Cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, 115–116, Sandmel, *Philo*, 24.

[267] Cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, 115–116; 125.

and event in Hebrew Scripture as a fruit ripe for allegorical plucking. The result of this allegorical interpretation, *full clarity*, often involves the transformation of a specific figure or incident from Scripture into a type or characteristic of general human existence.[268]

3.9.2 *Quaestiones in Genesin*

3.9.2.1 Introduction to *Quaestiones in Genesin*

The fragment from *Quaestiones in Genesin* is something of an overlooked mystery, mentioned rarely within Philonian studies and neglected in most considerations of Philo's use of the Melchizedek figure. In 1886, James R. Harris briefly mentioned the existence of a fragment hitherto believed to quote Gen 4:4,[269] one of the numerous minor fragments yet to be ascribed to a specific location within the Philonian corpus. In Harris' opinion, this fragment belongs to Philo's exposition of Gen 14:18, rather than 4:4.

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[268] *Agr.* 96–97: "When the allegorical interpretation is given, the mythical element vanishes away, and the truth emerges in full clarity". Translation from Kamesar, "Philo", 79. Cf. Samuel Sandmel, *Philo's Place in Judaism: A Study of Conceptions of Abraham in Jewish Literature* (New York: Ktav, 1972), 4; 17–28; 88; Kamesar, "Philo", 86; 91.

[269] James R. Harris, *Fragments of Philo Judaeus* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1886), 69. The passage is listed among those that "have not yet been identified", and is briefly described thus: "The following passage seems to belong to the Questions on Genesis xiv. 18, being found in a codex which quotes the Questions on Gen. iv. 4 and seems to have no other Philonea. This part of the Questions is lost in the Armenian", ibid., 70–71. Harris refers to John A. Cramer, *Catenarum Graecarum Catalogus* IV (Oxford: Karo & Lietzmann, 1843), 580, which describes the Nicetas Codex from Paris (gr. 238, sæc. xiii) as the source of his knowledge regarding the fragment. According to Adolf von Harnack, *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* (1:2; Leipzig, 1893), 838–840, the codex was compiled by the Archbishop of Heraclea in Thrace in the 11th century. He states that it is "eine Catene des Nicetas. in der u. a. Clemens Al., Euseb., Gregor. Thaumat., Irenaeus, Origenes (Marcion, Montanus) citiert werden, von Petr. Possinus (Tolosae 1646) nach einer Hs. des Erzbischofs von Toulouse, Ch. de Montchal, und der Abschnitt eines Cod. Vatic. herausgegeben worden". The existence of the fragment has only merited brief mentions in Ralph Marcus, *Philo. Supplements II: Questions and Answers on Exodus* (LCL 401; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953), 235, and in Ronald Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums 4; ed. Karl H. Rengstorf; Leiden: Brill, 1970), 435;437.

Unfortunately, what survives of Philo's commentary on Genesis has a large gap in the existing text between Gen 10:9 and 15:7. Thus the more precise context, and how this fragment may fit into it, remains unknown.

3.9.2.2 Melchizedek in *Quaestiones in Genesin*

Due to the difficulties in gaining access to the fragment, we here include the full text of the fragment, according to Harris' rendition, with a translation:

> Τὰ γὰρ τοῦ πολέμου ἀριστεῖα δίδωσι τῷ ἱερεῖ καὶ τὰς τῆς νίκης ἀπαρχάς. ἱεροπρεπστάτη δὲ καὶ ἁγιωτάτη πασῶν ἀπαρχῶν ἡ δεκάτη διὰ τὸ παντέλειον εἶναι τὸν ἀριθμόν, ἀφ' οὗ καὶ τοῖς ἱερεῦσι καὶ νεωκόροις αἱ δεκάται προστάξει νόμου καρπῶν καὶ θρεμμάτων ἀποδίδονται, ἀρξαντος τῆς ἀπαρχῆς Ἀβραάμ, ὃς καὶ τοῦ γένους ἄρχηγέτης ἐστίν
>
> *He gives the prize of victory and the first fruits of the war to the priest. And most venerable and most holy of all the first fruits is the tithe, because it is perfect in regards to the number, from which the tithes of the crops and the young stock are paid to the priests and the temple servants, according to the statutes of the Law; as it was Abraham who commenced (with) the first fruits, he who is the progenitor of his people*.

The logical subject for the first part of this fragment is Abraham, while the description of the priest corresponds well with Melchizedek. Based on this assumption, Harris' statement concerning the probable location of the fragment within the exposition on Gen 14 should be regarded as correct.

The brief fragment reveals a more historical focus upon the tithe and gifts than is found elsewhere in Philo's writings (e.g. *Congr.* 99). It is clear from this fragment that Philo interpreted the giver of the tithe in Genesis to be Abraham. The tithe is said to have been taken from the spoils of victory, and the tithe is said to be *perfect* in number—that is, ten (cf. *Congr.* 99, where Philo expounds upon this number). Philo also indicates that the reason for the survival of the institution of tithing to his time is that it was instituted and sanctioned by Abraham.

The fragment shows that Philo dedicated more of his writings to the figure of Melchizedek than has so far been assumed. Here the focus is on presenting a historical review of the figure and its interaction with the patriarch. The existence of this midrash upon the meeting in Philo's commentary on Genesis also provides an answer to the question of how Philo could presuppose (as is apparent from the following writings) that his audience had basic knowledge of the Genesis account and, especially, of the tithe and its significance.

3.9.3 *De Abrahamo*

3.9.3.1 Introduction to *De Abrahamo*

The next passage, *Abr.* 235, is part of Philo's longer biographical treatises, situated in what is normally designated as the second main part of his writings: the Exposition of the Laws.[270] As with its two lost sequels, *De Isaaco* and *De Jacobo*, *De Abrahamo* narrates the events and stories of the patriarchs' lives, although there are significant amounts of added narrative material.[271] The treatise and its two lost sequels treat the six main characters in two triads, grouped together by how they embodied the divine law at a time before Moses had received the written law. Philo employs these two triads to relate the history of mankind's soul. The description and significance of the first triad is dealt with in the initial part of *De Abrahamo* (7–47). Here we are told that Enos embodied hope, Enoch repentance, and Noah justice. All three characters were perfect in their generation, but being only imperfectly wise, were surpassed by the second, and more significant triad of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These are described in the remaining chapters and in the two lost sequels. All three patriarchs embody different aspects of wisdom: Abraham is wisdom through teaching; Isaac, through nature; and Jacob, through practice.[272] Philo describes Isaac as being "self-taught" (αὐτομαθῆ), a term he later uses to describe Melchizedek (*Congr.* 99). He emphasizes that this does not imply that Isaac did not listen to God—indeed, he is described as a "disciple of God". Philo regards "self-taught" as entailing listening to the inner Logos (or the rational higher mind). Abraham is the central figure in *De Abrahamo*, and

[270] Cf. Francis H. Colson, *On Abraham. On Joseph. On Moses* (LCL 289; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935), ix.
[271] Cf. ibid., ix–x; xvii; Royse, "Philo", 49.
[272] Cf. Colson, *On Abraham*, x–xi; Sandmel, *Philo*, 58–59; Royse, "Philo", 47–48.

through allegorical interpretations is presented as the perfect model of a pious man, who acquires virtue through instruction. Philo thus shows through Abraham how humanity, by its ability to reason intelligently, may begin the journey to the divine.[273]

3.9.3.2 Melchizedek in *De Abrahamo*

In *De Abrahamo,* the meeting between Melchizedek (who is not named) and Abraham is described thus:

> *When the great priest* (μέγας ἱερεύς) *of the greatest God* (μεγίστου θεοῦ) *saw him* [Abraham] *approaching with his trophies, leader and army alike unhurt, for he had lost none of his own company, he was astonished by the feat* (καταπλαγεὶς τὸ μέγεθος τῆς πράξεως)*, and, thinking, as indeed was natural, that such success was not won without God's directing care and help to their arms, he stretched his hands to heaven and honoured him with prayers on his behalf and offered sacrifices of thanksgiving for the victory and feasted handsomely those who had taken part in the contest, rejoicing and sharing their gladness as though the success were his own, and so indeed it was, for "the belongings of friends are held in common", as the proverb says, and this is far more true of the belongings of the good whose one end is to be well-pleasing to God* (235)*.* [274]

The Genesis narrative has been expanded by Philo by the addition of four elements: 1) Abraham suffered no losses during the campaign; 2) Melchizedek is said to "stretch his hands to heaven" in prayer; 3) Melchizedek offers sacrifices; and 4) Melchizedek offers a feast and rejoices in the victory.

In his rewriting, Philo emphasizes God's satisfaction with the patriarch.[275] Abraham, as the ultimate triumphant general, returns from a campaign where his small army has fought the enemy and suffered no casualties. Philo uses the Melchizedek figure to explain that such a miraculous victory could only have been possible through the help and

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[273] Colson, *On Abraham*, xi, notes how Philo uses Abraham to "illustrate his piety, hospitality, tact and kindness, courage and self-control". Cf. Sandmel, *Philo*, 58–59; Royse, "Philo", 47–48.

[274] Greek text and translation from Colson, *On Abraham*, although we have translated μέγας ἱερεύς as *great priest*, and μεγίστου θεοῦ as *greatest God*, rather than *high priest* and *most high God*, as Colson prefers.

[275] Cf. Mason, *"Priest Forever"*, 158.

wisdom of God.[276] The origin of Melchizedek's interpretation of the victory may originate in the blessing performed by Melchizedek in Gen 14:20, where he credits God for granting Abraham the victory. This victory is used by Philo as the catalyst for Melchizedek to go forth and congratulate Abraham. The description of this divine victory provides a natural reason for the meeting, and thus removes one of the problems of the Genesis account. Through an otherwise unknown proverb (*the belongings of friends are held in common*), Philo expounds upon the aspects of friendship, transforming Melchizedek into the embodiment of good friendship who rejoices in the successes of a friend as though they were his own.

The blessing of Melchizedek is based upon the victory, and consists of both prayers and sacrifices, concluding in a feast for the entire army. The offering of bread and wine of the Genesis narrative is thus transformed into a large feast—indicating that Philo regarded the initial transaction in the narrative as a welcoming gift from one king to another, and including the latter's entourage. Philo presents Melchizedek as a *great priest* (μέγας ἱερεύς)—a way of expressing the office of the High Priest. Melchizedek offers the initial sacrifice in the name of the *greatest God* (μεγίστου θεοῦ). Philo's focus has meant that there are details he omits. In particular, we find no mention of the tithe (although Philo may have felt that this was a matter fully discussed in the preceding and subsequent texts). The omission shows that Philo's focus in *De Abrahamo* was not on Melchizedek, but on the concept of friendship against the backdrop of Abraham's virtuous conduct.

3.9.4 *De Congressu Eruditionis Gratia*

3.9.4.1 Introduction to *De Congressu Eruditionis Gratia*

The third of Philo's references to the Melchizedek figure occurs in the treatise *Congr.* 98–99. Grouped with other Philonian allegorical

[276] This presentation of Abraham as the victorious general may derive from the tradition (or may be the origin of the tradition) that Abraham was the forefather of the Spartans (found in *A.J.* 12.226, 1 Maccabees 12.10, and 2 Maccabees 5.9; cf. Louis H. Feldman, "Abraham the General in Josephus", in *Nourished with Peace: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism in Memory of Samuel Sandmel* (ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn, Earle Hilgert, and Burton L. Mack; Chico, Calif.: Scholars' Press, 1984), 48 n.19.

commentaries, *De congressu* is ordered according to the biblical lemmata. Its content, characterized as showing "little eloquence and spirituality", is primarily limited to material from Gen 16:1–6.[277] The cumbersome title hides the fact that this treatise is an allegory on the union of Abraham with Hagar, illustrating the importance of training the immature soul.[278] Sarah represents *Virtue* while Hagar represents *Encyclia*, from which Abraham must learn (71–72). Indeed all the wives of Abraham, Jacob, and Isaac are allegorized in the text: for instance, Isaac needs only one wife because he is "self-taught", whereas Abraham needs both Sarah and Hagar, as he represents learning through teaching.[279]

3.9.4.2 Melchizedek in *De Congressu Eruditionis Gratia*

In *De congressu*, Philo has again selected themes from the Genesis story to expound upon, in this case, the concept of tithing and the number ten. Ten is the number of years Abraham spent in Canaan before receiving Hagar, and according to Philo's allegorical interpretation, also the amount of time it took for his soul to be ready for the teacher (e.g. before *he went in unto her*). This leads Philo into a lecture on the number ten as the perfect number, further illustrated by Abraham's triumph as the tenth adversary against the nine kings (91–93), and by the ten souls that Abraham promises to find in order to save Sodom (109).

In the midst of this proclamation of the perfection of the number ten, Philo again mentions Melchizedek:

> *For the first and best thing in us is the reason* (τὸ γὰρ πρῶτον καὶ ἄριστον ἐν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς ὁ λογισμός ἐστι)*, and it is only right that from its intelligence, its shrewdness, its apprehension, its prudence, and the other qualities which belong to it, we should offer first fruits to God, who gave to it its fertility of thinking. It was this feeling which prompted the Man of Practice* [Jacob] *when he vowed thus, "Of all that thou givest me, I will give a tenth to thee"; which prompted the oracle* (χρησμὸς) *that follows the blessing given to the victory by Melchizedek the holder of that priesthood, whose tradition he had learned from none other but himself*

[277] Francis H. Colson and George H. Whitaker, *On the Confusion of Tongues. On the Migration of Abraham. Who Is the Heir of Divine Things? On Mating with the Preliminary Studies* (LCL 261; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932), 451.
[278] Cf. ibid., 449: "The subject of the treatise is the training of the mind by the school subjects, the training being termed 'mating', or 'intercourse', because the union of Abraham with Hagar is the allegorical form in which it is set".
[279] Cf. ibid., 451–453, and Royse, "Philo", 43.

> (αὐτομαθῆ καὶ αὐτοδίδακτον). *For "he gave him", it runs, "a tenth from all"; from the things of sense, right use of sense; from the things of speech, good speaking; from the things of thought, good thinking* (98–99).[280]

This time, the Melchizedek figure is used in an allegorical interpretation of Abraham's tithe and of the amount given. The tithe in question is the primary reason that Philo includes Melchizedek in his allegory upon the spiritual schooling of Abraham. The first tithe mentioned is from Gen 28:22, where Jacob promised God a tenth of anything he received. Philo uses this one tithe to justify the practise of tithing in general. He creates from this example a metaphorical tithe for all to follow on their spiritual journey. This tithe should include a tenth of all things, both sensible and elements of reason and mind,[281] and Philo emphasizes that the *right use of sense*, *good speaking*, and *good thinking* are all elements that should be devoted to God. The second tithe is from Gen 14:20, described with the word χρησμὸς. It follows the victory blessing and is consistent with the content of the previously discussed fragment from *Quaestiones in Genesin*.

While most elements from the Genesis narrative have been removed in order to emphasize the tithe, Philo has also inserted a few new elements into the text. The priesthood of Melchizedek is described as something that he *learned from none other but himself*—hence, an αὐτομαθῆ and αὐτοδίδακτον priesthood. Based on Philo's description and praise of Isaac's self-taught status (*Ios*. 1), such a description of Melchizedek's priesthood constitutes "high praise coming from Philo".[282] This idea may originate in the simple deduction that, since Melchizedek is the first priest mentioned in Scripture, he must have been an autodidact, a logical assumption using the *argumento e silentio*. Philo in this passage again uses the Melchizedek figure primarily to expound upon a theological issue that only partially involves Melchizedek. Here, the focus of his interpretation of the Genesis texts is on the characters who instigated the institution of tithing, namely Abraham and Jacob.

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[280] Greek text and translation from Colson, *Confusion*.
[281] Cf. Williamson, *Philo*, 437, and Horton, *Melchizedek*, 55.
[282] Mason, *"Priest Forever",* 160.

3.9.5 *Legum Allegoriae*

3.9.5.1 Introduction to *Legum Allegoriae*

The last and lengthiest passage in which Philo includes the Melchizedek figure is *Leg.* 3.79–82. As with *De congressu*, *Legum allegoriae* is part of Philo's allegorical commentaries ordered by Scriptural lemmata. This, the original third book of *Legum allegoriae*, contains Philo's allegorical interpretation of the events in the Garden of Eden. Philo explicitly states that, although he is interpreting the historical parts of the Pentateuch, his primary focus is on how the text may assist the spiritual progress of mankind (*Congr.* 44).[283] In Philo's interpretation, Adam and Eve succumbed to a desire for pleasure that led them to reject God, thus abandoning true wisdom and happiness. These events allow Philo to lecture on the souls' journey towards liberating itself from the control of the senses and passions. The journey towards regaining the original state of virtue is thus the primary focus of the treatise.[284]

3.9.5.2 Melchizedek in *Legum Allegoriae*

Allegorizing upon Gen 3:14, Philo returns to the figure of Melchizedek, in a context not directly related to either the preceding or the following text, creating a break in the narrative flow of the text. At the start of the longest and most developed of the passages in which Philo mentions Melchizedek, the priest-king is presented in opposition to evil leaders. This provides Philo with the opportunity to exemplify an individual raised to a high position, but lacking prior deeds or merits to explain it: *Melchizedek, too, has God made both king of peace, for that is the meaning of "Salem", and His own priest. He has not fashioned beforehand any deed of his, but produces him to begin with as such a king, peaceable and worthy of His own priesthood. For he is entitled "the righteous king" and a "king" is a*

[283] Cf. Kamesar, "Philo", 85.
[284] Cf. Royse, "Philo", 40.

thing of enmity with a despot, the one being the author of laws, the other of lawlessness (79).[285]

Focusing on etymology, Philo initially states that Salem should be interpreted as *peace*, as God made Melchizedek both a *king of peace* (βασιλεὺς τῆς εἰρήνης) and priest. Melchizedek is interpreted as *the righteous king* (βασιλεὺς δίκαιος), the law-abiding king in opposition to the lawless despot. This statement allows Philo to embark on a lengthy allegorization regarding the concept of the righteous king. The righteous king rules through reason, whereas the despot (or the prince of war) governs through his senses, which corrupt the being into wickedness and lust: *So mind, the despot, decrees for both soul and body harsh and hurtful decrees working grievous woes, conduct, I mean, such as wickedness prompts, and free indulgence of the passions. But the king in the first place resorts to persuasion rather than decrees, and in the next place issues directions such as to enable a vessel, the living being I mean, to make life's voyage successfully, piloted by the good pilot, who is right principle. Let the despot's title therefore be ruler of war, the king's prince of peace, of Salem, and let him offer to the soul food full of joy and gladness; for he brings bread and wine, things which Ammonites and Moabites refused to supply to the seeing one, on which account they are excluded from the divine congregation and assembly. These characters, Ammonites deriving their nature from sense-perception their mother, and Moabites deriving theirs from mind their father, who hold that all things owe their coherence to these two things, mind and sense-perception, and take no thought of God, "shall not enter", said Moses, "into the congregation of the Lord, because they did not meet us with bread and water" when we came out from the passions of Egypt* (80–81).

The war between the kings in Gen 14 is used to represent "the inner warfare between the higher mind on the one hand, on the other, the five senses and four passions, a warfare to determine which would control, the higher mind or the senses and passions".[286] Philo's opinions on kingship conform to a general Hellenistic ideal whereby the legitimate king was the philosopher king who, by freeing his higher mind, could rule according to the general law of nature.[287] The tyrant or the incompetent king was illegitimate, because he ruled according to his senses. The legitimate king—a term of the highest praise (indeed, God is in *Spec.* 1.45 titled the

[285] Greek text and English translation from Francis H. Colson and George H. Whitaker, *On the Creation: Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis 2 and 3* (LCL 226; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1929).
[286] Sandmel, *Philo*, 62; Cf. Colson, *On Abraham*, 3.
[287] Cf. Sandmel, *Philo*, 104.

Great King)—would become a *law articulate in a man*, governing according to God's law, the truest law of nature and the universe.[288]

In the final section (*Leg.* 82), Philo turns to defining Melchizedek and his deity: *But let Melchizedek instead of water offer wine, and give to souls strong drink, that they may be seized by a divine intoxication, more sober than sobriety itself. For he is a priest, even Logos, having as his portion Him that is, and all his thoughts of God are high and vast and sublime: For he is the priest of the Most High, not that there is any other not Most High—for God being One "is in heaven above and on earth beneath, and there is none beside Him"—but to conceive of God not in low earthbound ways but in lofty terms, such as transcend all other greatness and all else that is free from matter, calls up in us a picture of the Most High.*

Philo commences this section by focusing on the wine offered by Melchizedek. This offer is allegorized into the *strong drink* (rather than the meek water) that the king offers the souls as food. The wine is the soul's *divine intoxication, more sober than sobriety itself*, a wine that "produces in man the Sober Intoxication of divine ecstasy".[289] Philo contrasts the offer of wine by Melchizedek to Abraham, with the story of Deut 23, where the Ammonites and Moabites refuse the Israelites water and bread, a story that serves as antithesis to Melchizedek's actions. Apparently, the wine is tied primarily to Melchizedek's kingly, not priestly, role; the intoxication induced by the directions offered by the king of peace allows the soul to enter a state of the highest order.[290]

Melchizedek's deity, God the Most High (θεὸς ὕψιστος), is explained by Philo as the correct reflection of the Jewish God. This brings Philo to describe the Melchizedek figure as not only a king and priest, but as Logos. Philo's use of the term Logos in connection with Melchizedek necessitates a discussion of what the author may have meant by this appellation. Philo's enigmatic Logos is intimately connected with the unfathomable God. Throughout his writings, Philo utilizes the term Logos no less than 1,300 times (according to the Longenecker's calculations),[291] yet he nowhere fully defines his understanding of the concept. It thus remains mysterious, and at times describes contradictory elements.[292] To facilitate a better understanding of Philo's changing Logos concept we will here attempt to divide it into three main aspects. The first is what we may term the "divine"

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[288] Ibid., 104–108; 122.

[289] Cf. Erwin R. Goodenough, *By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1935), 151.

[290] Cf. Horton, *Melchizedek*, 57.

[291] Longenecker, "Melchizedek", 171.

[292] The relation between Philo's Logos and Sophia presents an example of such inconsistencies; in *Ebr. 30–31*, Sophia is the source of Logos, while in *Fug.* 97, it is Logos that produces Sophia; cf. Sandmel, *Philo*, 94, 107.

aspect—that which includes an equation with God (*Opif.* 24–25), the image of God (*Conf.* 146), God's firstborn, or eldest son (*Conf.* 146–147; *Somn.* 1.215; *Agr.* 31; and, with Sophia as the mother, in *Ebr.* 30–31), and a being who is second only to God (*Leg.* 2.86). The Logos is also described as that which embodies all the names and powers of God (*Mos.* 2.99)

The second of Philo's aspects of Logos describes elements at the "cosmic" level of creation. Here Logos is said to be the entire intelligible world (*Opif.* 24–25), the *manifest countenance of God* that ensures the consistency of the universe (*Her.* 188) and neutralizes chaos in the world (*Plant.* 8–10).

Finally, Philo uses Logos to describe those elements that guide humanity through the *allegory of the soul* (*Deus* 182; *Conf.* 145–147). These elements include the symbols of manna, the guiding light (*Leg.* 3.169–171), and Hebrew Scripture (*Fug.* 108). The parts of mankind's higher mind that can obtain a vision of God are similarly described as Logos, as are the crucial concepts of virtue, wisdom, pure philosophy (which means Judaism to Philo), and the divine attributes of mercy and justice, wherever they may manifest themselves (*Cher.* 27–30).[293]

Only rarely does Philo employ the term Logos to describe individual beings, but in *Her.* 205, an angel armed with a death-dealing sword is described thus, and Moses as embodying the *Hieros Logos*.[294] The office of the High Priest is also described as Logos as a representative of the Jewish cultic ceremonies that forms an essential part of mankind's possibility of envisioning the divine (*Fug.* 108; *Somn.* 1.215). And it is at this juncture of our review of Philo's Logos—between a cultic office and an individual being—that we find the most plausible explanation of Philo's description of Melchizedek as Logos. To Philo, Logos serves to describe God and that which cocreated with God, but also those elements that later serve as a permanent two-way interface between the transcendent divine and the sensible world. Logos is the tool God uses to intervene and act within the

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[293] Cf. Cristina Termini, "Philo's Thought within the Context of Middle Judaism", in *Cambridge Companion to Philo* (ed. Adam Kamesar; Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 98–99; Sandmel, *Philo*, 100.

[294] Cf. ibid., 95–96, and Pearson, "Early Judaism", 181. Despite his focus on the Logos, Philo does not elaborate on the nature or purpose of angels in any great detail—contrary also to the contemporary flourishing interest in these beings. Philo acknowledges that angels were created to serve God, but he does not credit them with much individuality (few, if any, are mentioned by name) or with the ability to transgress the commands of God (such notions are even characterized as superstition in *Gig.* 18). In Philo's universe, angels are docile servitors ordered into an army of servants, and which serve God through the angelic liturgy at the cosmic temple, and seem to take part in rewarding the faithful and in the punishment of the unfaithful (e.g., *Somn.* 1.141; *Abr.* 115; *QE* 2.13; *Spec.* 1.66; *Virt* 73–74; *Conf.* 180–181; *Fug.* 66–67); cf. Termini, "Philo's Thought", 101–103.

world, while avoiding direct contact with it.[295] While at times equated with the divine, Logos is at the same time Philo's description of all the elements that enable man to ascend towards the Godhead: hence Scripture, cultic activities, concepts such as wisdom and philosophy, exemplary individuals, and the high priest.

In the present text, Philo terms Melchizedek the *priest of the Most High* and Logos, who was made a priest by God himself. Given that the text here immediately shifts to focus on the nature of Melchizedek's priesthood—and that this is the only such instance in the four Melchizedek references in the surviving Philonian text corpus—Philo appears to be describing not the person of Melchizedek, but Melchizedek in his capacity as a (proto-)High Priest, a mediator between humanity and God. In this case, although Melchizedek is not described as High Priest *per se*, it seems plausible that Philo regarded Melchizedek's priestly functions as an example of Logos.

The application of Logos to the Melchizedek figure, with all the associations attached to this term by Philo, makes it necessary to discuss whether Philo may have implied Melchizedek to possess some exalted status, as has been suggested by some scholars.[296] Yet our analysis of the four Philonian references to the Melchizedek figure reveal that Philo had little interest in the figure itself: three of the passages are concerned only in passing with the figure, and in all four, Melchizedek is used almost exclusively to emphasize theological aspects only partially related to the figure (such as the tithe and the exemplary king). In only a single instance do we find any indication of something more than human being ascribed to the figure. As Philo elsewhere uses the term Logos to describe the office of the High Priest, it appears a more plausible conclusion that Philo in *Legum allegoriae* is implying that the first (proto-)High Priest mentioned in Scripture would naturally have functioned as a vessel of the mediating aspects of the Logos, just like later High Priests. Thus, in *Leg.* 82, it is not the "historical" Melchizedek figure that is ascribed an exalted status as part of the Divine Logos, but rather the priestly office which functions as part of what assists humankind in its journey towards a vision of God.

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[295] Cf. Roberto Radiche, "Philo's Theology and Theory of Creation", in *Cambridge Companion to Philo* (ed. Adam Kamesar; Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 129; 136.

[296] Cf., e.g., Balla, *Melchizedekian*, 28; Pearson, "Early Judaism", 181; and Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 165.

3.9.6 Conclusions to Melchizedek in the Writings of Philo

In the preceding chapter, we analysed the four references to Melchizedek that appear in the surviving works of Philo of Alexandria. The passages constitute four interpretations of the Genesis *Vorlage*, each focusing on a specific theological question upon which Philo wished to expound. In the first passage, the fragment under investigation was part of *Quaestiones in Genesin*. In this section, Philo was concerned with the concept of the tithe, as illustrated by Abraham who gave the "first fruits" of his spoils to Melchizedek. Philo considers that Abraham's descendants should repeat this model, giving from their produce to the temple and to the priesthood. In *De Abrahamo,* the focus was on Melchizedek recognizing the miraculous victory awarded to Abraham by God. Melchizedek responded to this in an appropriate manner by sharing in Abraham's rejoicing, which Philo used to expound upon the concept of friendship.

In *De congressu*, Philo returned to the practice of the tithe, resurrecting several elements mentioned briefly in the passage from *Quaestiones in Genesin* and discussing them in more detail—including the concept that the tithe is a divinely instituted practice to be followed by all men as an offering back to God. In both passages, Philo associated the tithe with the temple and with the Levitical priesthood. In the fourth text, *Legum allegoriae*, we find Philo's most developed treatment of Melchizedek, in which the figure is introduced, and his name analysed with an allegorical interpretation. This proves to be similar to what we will find in the references to Melchizedek in Hebrews and Josephus. Indeed, Philo used Melchizedek primarily as an allegory of the proper way for a king to govern his people—that is, through righteousness and persuasion—and further allegorized the person of Melchizedek to show how an individual should control his passion.

In all four cases, Philo presents Melchizedek as a priest-king on the pattern of the Genesis *Vorlage*, although certain elements are lacking from his rewritings, most notably the Canaanite origin of Melchizedek. Although Philo apparently regarded the figure and its interactions with Abraham as historic truth, he has no particular interest in the figure of the historic priest, except insofar as it provides an opportunity for allegory. These allegorical opportunities were primarily found in the priestly functions of the Melchizedek figure, and Philo in each text recognizes the significance of Melchizedek's priesthood. This intuitive and self-taught priesthood allowed Melchizedek to recognize the actions of God and to function as his tool on earth. This priesthood brings Philo, in *Legum allegoriae*, to state that Melchizedek was *even Logos*.

Philo's Logos, as discussed above, is the part of the divine that created the universe, that which interacts with this creation (the connection between God and the world), and that which assists man in controlling the forces of his passions and to ascend to a vision of the divine. In the context of the Melchizedek figure, we found it less plausible that Philo was ascribing any exalted traits to the actual person of Melchizedek. Instead, the reference to Melchizedek as Logos is a reflection on his function as High Priest—and as the first, self-taught priest, he is a most important one, at that. Thus Philo was not concerned with Melchizedek "the man" as Logos, but with Melchizedek "the priest" as Logos, in accordance with other passages in which Philo describes the priestly office as Logos (e.g. *Fug.* 108; *Somn.* 1.215).

Our interpretation of why Philo described Melchizedek as Logos also suggests that all four texts belong to the neutral category of interpretation. While they all use the Melchizedek figure, they do so primarily in order to expound upon theological points, rather than to discuss the figure itself. The parallels between Philo's Melchizedek and the previous texts are sparse; that the offering of bread and wine develops into a feast is shared by *De Abrahamo* and *Genesis Apocryphon*, and the focus on tithe as a divine institution serving to maintain the Levitical priesthood found in *Quaestiones in Genesin* and *Legum allegoriae* corresponds to the surviving parts of *Jubilees* and the *Greek Fragment on the Life of Abraham*. To Philo, Melchizedek represents a historical figure, but his interest in this figure is due to its allegorical potential in regards to the theological questions discussed by Philo.

3.10 *2 Book of Enoch*

3.10.1 Introduction to *2 Book of Enoch*

The Jewish pseudepigraphon known as *2 Book of Enoch* (*2 Enoch*) creatively expands upon Gen 5:21–32 in its retelling of the life of the seventh antediluvian patriarch, Enoch. In the text's final chapters, we once again encounter the figure of Melchizedek (Мелхиседек), but this time in one of its most intriguing guises, which we will soon examine in detail. Before *2 Enoch* employs the figure of Melchizedek, its main story narrates Enoch's travels and details his moral and ethical teachings to his family, focusing on his ascent through the seven heavens. The text is closely linked

to, and expands upon, material used in *1 Enoch*,[297] but whereas *1 Enoch* focuses on the visions of Enoch, *2 Enoch* concentrates on the metamorphosis of Enoch into a celestial being more exalted than the angels (21:3; 22:6; 36:3; 67:2).[298]

Although the Hebrew or Greek original has long since been lost, several textual variants of *2 Enoch* have survived in nine major manuscripts and several copies containing variants of these. All were written in Church Slavonic between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, and all have been extensively expanded, abbreviated, and altered.[299] Proposals for the date of

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[297] *2 Enoch* itself serves as an intermediary text to the later *3 Enoch*; cf. Andrei A. Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition* (Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 107; ed. Martin Hengel and Peter Schäfer; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 11–12; and Philip Alexander, "3 Enoch and the Talmud", *JSJ* 18 (1987): 247–248, who regards *2 Enoch* as closer to *3 Enoch* than to *1 Enoch*.

[298] Francis I. Andersen, "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch (Late First Century A.D.) with Appendix: 2 Enoch in Merilo Pravednoe", in *OTP* 1: *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), 139n.p: "Enoch not only attains the rank (i.e., location and function) of an angel; he becomes like the members of the highest echelon in the seventh heaven". The angels are said to honour Enoch, his physical clothes are removed by Michael, and finally the resulting angelomorphic Enoch is anointed with oil; cf. Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, 10; 287, and Gieschen, "Enoch", 380–382. In *2 Enoch*, the figure of Adam has also been given a key role and appears throughout the text until Enoch, residing near the throne of God, becomes, through his status, like a second Adam, assuming "the glorious status of the protoplast", as well as his function as king of the earth, his wisdom, and other qualities. cf. Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, 211–253, who mentions (ibid., 252) that the Adamic traditions were "widespread in the Alexandrian environment of the first century C.E., the possible place and time of the composition of 2 Enoch"; also Michael E. Stone, "The Fall of Satan and Adam's Penance: Three Notes on the Books of Adam and Eve", *JSJ* 44 (1993): 47–48.

[299] The Church Slavonic language has proven to be something of an obstacle to the study of *2 Enoch* (and has even been termed "esoteric" by Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, 8). The question of whether the original composition was written in Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic remains debated. According to Andersen, "Enoch", 94, the entire text "abounds with Semitisms", but it appears that the present versions were translated into Church Slavonic from Greek, as it follows the pattern of most Slavonic texts that were not Slavic productions, and in 30:13 there is an acronym using the Greek names of stars and of the compass points; cf. Grant Macaskill, "2 Enoch: Manuscripts, Recension, and Original Language", in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only* (SJS 4; ed. Andrei A. Orlov, Gabriele Boccaccini, and Jason Zurawski; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 101. Despite this acronym, the abundance of Semitisms in the text makes it appear plausible that *2 Enoch* was composed in Hebrew, and afterwards translated into Greek. Joost L. Hagen reported at the Fifth International Enoch Seminar on the identification of four fragments of *2 Enoch* in Coptic among manuscripts from Nubia, preliminarily dated, on palaeographical grounds, to the 8th–10th centuries. As the fragments identified so far only contain material from *2 En.* 36–42, they do not contribute new material to the Melchizedek story. The story of the excavation of the fragments in 1972 by J. M. Plumley, of the identification of their contents by J. L. Hagen in 2009 (through

composition vary from the first century C.E. to the fifteenth century. The late date was first advocated by Maunder, who in 1918 presented a hypothesis in which the text was a "specimen of Bogomil propaganda", situating it between the twelfth and fifteenth century.[300] Milik favoured a slightly earlier provenance, with *2 Enoch* being a reworking of *1 Enoch* by Christian Byzantine monks during the ninth or tenth century, based on its subject, lexical features, and its apparent advocation of transmission of the priestly vocation from uncle to nephew (that is, from Methuselah to Melchizedek), as was common in the Greek church during the Byzantine period.[301]

Today the general scholarly consensus dates the text earlier, typically to some time during the first century C.E., and often to before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.[302] This early date (advocated in 1896 by Charles, who declared that the composition of the text could, "with reasonable certainty", be placed in the first half of the first century), is primarily based on the text's focus, on the fact that *2 Enoch* appears to describe a functioning temple and priesthood, and on the text's lack of reference to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.[303] That the text is of Jewish provenance, rather

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the use of Google's *Advanced Search*), and a preliminary analysis of their contents can be found in Joost L. Hagen, "No Longer Slavonic Only: 2 Enoch Attested in Coptic from Nubia", in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only* (SJS 4; ed. Andrei A. Orlov, Gabriele Boccaccini, and Jason Zurawski; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 7–34. It is because of these fragments that we will refrain from the traditional name of "(Slavonic) *2 Enoch*".

[300] Annie S. D. Maunder, "The Date and Place of Writing of the Slavonic Book of Enoch", *The Observatory* 41 (1918): 309–316. Maunder's hypothesis was modified the following year by John K. Fortheringham, "The Date and Place of Writing of the Slavonic Enoch", *JTS* 20:79 (1919): 252, who arrived at a date during the 7th century.

[301] Józef T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4, with the Collaboration of Matthew Black* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 109–111.

[302] Although there are still scholars who urge caution regarding the date of *2 Enoch*, such as James R. Davila, "Melchizedek, the 'Youth' and Jesus", in *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity: Papers from an International Conference at St. Andrews in 2001* (*STDJ 46*; ed. James R. Davila; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 261n20, who terms a 1st century date as "highly debatable", and Andersen, "Enoch", 97, who stated that "in every respect *2 Enoch* remains an enigma. So long as the date and location remain unknown, no use can be made of it for historical purposes". Regardless of these reservations, Andersen was inclined to date the text early, and as the product of a Jewish community.

[303] Cf., e.g., Robert H. Charles, "2 Enoch, or The Book of the Secrets of Enoch", in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English. Volume II: Pseudepigrapha*, ed. Robert H. Charles, trans. Nevill Forbes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 429, Delcor, "Melchizedek", 128, who argues for a date of composition in the early part of the 1st century; Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, 333, who through his work on the anti-Noachic polemical aspects in the text, states that *2 Enoch* can "safely" be assumed to be from the time before 70 C.E., and Gieschen, "Enoch", 366, who also dates it to

than Christian, has also become the general consensus, due to *2 Enoch*'s content, focus, and close affinity to what may be termed the Enochian tradition. *2 Enoch* thus represents the exegetical product of what appears to have been a fringe sect within Second Temple Judaism, the work of a Hellenized Jew who may have originated in, or had close connections to, the Alexandrian Diaspora.[304]

3.10.2 Melchizedek in *2 Book of Enoch*

The primary interest of *2 Enoch* to this study is the so called Melchizedek story contained in the final chapters of *2 Enoch* (69–73). These chapters have traditionally been regarded as late Christian additions to the text.[305] Yet although the Melchizedek story does in its present form contain

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before 70. *2 Enoch*'s pronounced focus on the sacerdotal aspects of the priestly successions suggests an early date, according to Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, 333. The composition also puts little focus on the role of the Mosaic Law. This may, according to Gabriele Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism: Jewish Thought 300 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1991), 7–25, be a further indication of early composition, as later texts tend to focus on the Mosaic Law, rather than on specific figures, as a means of deliverance form sin; cf. also Gabriele Boccaccini, "Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition: The Contributions of Italian Scholarship", in *Mysteries and Revelations: Apocalyptic Studies Since the Uppsala Colloquium* (JSPSup 9; ed. John J. Collins and James H. Charlesworth; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 38–58.

[304] As *2 Enoch* has no focus on Abraham or Moses, and does not contain any references to the Torah, it thus lacks "some of the most distinctive and definitive tenets of main-line Judaism", according to Andersen, "Enoch", 96. Some scholars, however, disagree with this view, e.g., Christfried Böttrich, "The Melchizedek Story of 2 (Slavonic) Enoch: A Reaction to A. Orlov", *JSJ* 32 (2001): 455–456. Christfried Böttrich, "The 'Book of the Secrets of Enoch' (2 En): Between Jewish Origin and Christian Transmission. An Overview", in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only* (SJS 4; ed. Andrei A. Orlov, Gabriele Boccaccini, and Jason Zurawski; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 58, provides a list of passages that he believes shows a close affinity to Philo's writings, although none provide a conclusive connection. See Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, 326, for a review of the discussion of the author of *2 Enoch* and for a list of scholars who favour an Alexandrian origin.

[305] E.g., Charles, "2 Enoch", 429, who excluded the entire Melchizedek story, arguing that it was an "appendix" composed by later Christian heretics. According to Böttrich, "'Secrets of Enoch'", 45n.43, Charles' decision resulted from his choice of manuscripts (primarily MS P), although he had access to the, then unpublished, Sokolov work on MS R, wherein the episode is an integral part of the text (see below for a discussion on the Melchizedek story's place within *2 Enoch*); Horton, *Melchizedek*, 81, follows the example of Charles and does not examine *2 Enoch*, which he terms a "very late" text. Gianotto, *Melchisedek*, 45n.1, similarly refrains from discussing the text, terming it an "appendix" of a hypothetical date.

passages clearly recognizable as later Christian additions, the remaining narrative should be regarded as an integral part of the story, and thus from the same period of composition as the rest of *2 Enoch*.[306]

That the integral structure of *2 Enoch* includes the Melchizedek story is revealed by the text's primary interest—the salvation of mankind. In the first part of *2 Enoch*, we find a strong focus on the origin of evil and sin (as in ch. 41), the sole deliverance from which only appears in the concluding chapters (69–73).[307] Humanity's woes receive their potential deliverance through the actions of the Melchizedek figure, and without this figure, the composition would lack a saviour figure, Enoch having been metamorphosed.[308] So while chapters 1–68 focus on the looming end times, chapters 69–73 shift the focus and supply the priestly mediator who will, eventually, give rise to the priesthood that will save and redeem mankind.[309]

Despite the claim that there is only one recension containing the Melchizedek story,[310] the situation is in fact somewhat different, as the story appears in slightly different forms in no less than six of the major manuscripts representing all of the different recensions.[311] The manuscripts of *2 Enoch* have traditionally been divided into three recensions: the

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[306] Cf. Andersen, "Enoch", 95, who states that if the Melchizedek story is indeed "ancient, this part of 2 Enoch should be added to the Qumran Melchizedek traditions as background for the Christian treatment of this theme in Hebrews"; Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, 333. Böttrich, "Melchizedek Story", 447, states that "there can be no doubt, the Melchizedek story belongs to the original corpus of 2 En.", Paolo Sacchi and Lucio Troiani, *Apocrifi dell'antico testamento, vol. V: Letteratura giudaica di lingua greca* (Brescia: Paideia, 1997), 498–507, regards the Melchizedek story as earlier than Hebrews. If the Melchizedek story was the work of a different author than the one responsible for the preceding chapters, then it must have been a contemporary author who very early on inserted the Melchizedek figure into the Enochian tradition and narrative; cf. ibid., 495–507, Charles A. Gieschen, "The Different Functions of a Similar Melchizedek Tradition in 2 Enoch and the Epistle to the Hebrews", in *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals* (JSNTSup 148, Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity 5; ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 366–367, and Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "2 Enoch and the New Perspective on Apocalyptic", in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only* (SJS 4; ed. Andrei A. Orlov, Gabriele Boccaccini, and Jason Zurawski; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 144–148.

[307] A single exception exists: in *2 En.* 64:5, Enoch is mentioned as the one chosen to carry "away the sin of mankind". English translation of *2 Enoch* from Andersen, "Enoch".

[308] Interestingly, *2 Enoch* specifically mentions that Enoch sits at the left side of God (23:1–6), which leaves room for a future "eschatological priestly deliverer" to sit on the right side, perhaps in fulfilment of Ps 110; cf. Gieschen, "Enoch", 382.

[309] Cf. Gieschen, "Functions", 367–368.

[310] Cf. Charles, "2 Enoch", 429, and Horton, *Melchizedek*, 81.

[311] Cf., e.g., Andersen, "Enoch", 92n.3, and Macaskill, "2 Enoch", 84–87.

"short" (MSS A, U, Syn, Tr, B, Rum, No. 41, and No. 42), the "long" (R (destroyed by German bombs in 1941), J, P, and P^2), and the "very short" (N, V, B^2, G, Chr, and Chr^2).[312] Because of the lack of a "*2 Enoch* prototype", the question of which recension should be given priority has been fiercely debated.[313] The recent discovery by Hagen of Coptic fragments of *2 Enoch* may provide evidence for settling this discussion. His findings indicate that the Coptic fragments represent a text most closely connected to the short recension, and particularly to MSS U and A, indicating that it is the short recension that is the most ancient.[314] As the Melchizedek story exists in all the recensions, reveals no evidence of ever having existed independently, and contain elements that appear to be pre-70 C.E. (such as the sacerdotal material), it should be considered an integral part of the most ancient passages.[315]

Within the Melchizedek story, we find two disparate sections (71:32–37 and 72:6–7).[316] That they are clearly Christian interpolations has been the

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[312] Cf. Macaskill, "2 Enoch", 85–91. Andersen, "Enoch", 92–93, uses a slightly different division: a very long recension (J, and P), a long (R), a short (A, U, and Tr, and Syn), and a very short recension (B, N, V, B2, and Rum).

[313] For a more detailed review of this discussion, see Andersen, "Enoch", 92–93, Böttrich, "Melchizedek Story", 448, Böttrich, "'Secrets of Enoch'", 39–44, and Sacchi and Troiani, *Apocrifi*, 493–495.

[314] Cf. Hagen, "No Longer Slavonic Only", 29–30.

[315] Cf., e.g., Andersen, "Enoch", 92–93, Andrei A. Orlov, "The Sacerdotal Traditions of 2 Enoch and the Date of the Text", in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only* (SJS 4; ed. Andrei A. Orlov, Gabriele Boccaccini, and Jason Zurawski; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 103–106; David W. Suter, "Excavating 2 Enoch: The Question of Dating and the Sacerdotal Traditions", in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only* (SJS 4; ed. Andrei A. Orlov, Gabriele Boccaccini, and Jason Zurawski; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 122; Böttrich, "Melchizedek Story", 447.

[316] 71:32–37: "And afterward, in the last generation, there will be another Melkisedek, the first of 12 priests. And the last will be the head of all, a great archpriest, the Word and Power of God, who will perform miracles, greater and more glorious than all the previous ones. He, Melkisedek, will be the priest and king in the place Akuzan, that is to say, in the center of the earth, where Adam was created, and there will be his final grave. And in connection with that archpriest it is written how he also will be buried there, where the center of the earth is, just as Adam also buried his own son there—Abel, whom his brother Cain murdered; for he lay for 3 years unburied, until he saw a bird called Jackdaw, how it buried its own young". And 72:6–7: "And when the twelfth generation shall come into being, and there will be one thousand and 70 years, and there will be born in that generation a righteous man. And the Lord will tell him that he should go out to that mountain where stands the arc of Noe, your brother. And he will find there another Melkisedek, who has been living there for 7 years, hiding himself from the people who sacrifice to idols, so that they might not kill him. He will bring him out, and he will be the first priest and king in the city Salim in the style of this Melkisedek, the originator of the priests. The years will be completed up to that time—3 thousand and 4 hundred and 32—from the beginning and the creation of Adam. And

primary evidence for the belief that chapters 69–73 are younger than the main storyline. These passages exist only in the longer recensions of *2 Enoch*, although they may have been part of the shorter recensions as well, judging from the few editorial marks still identifiable. The two insertions appear to be the work of a single interpolator, and share typological conceptions with later patristic exegesis.[317] The insertions may date to between the fourth and seventh centuries, due to their concern about limiting the authority of Melchizedek and establishing a clear connection between the Melchizedek of *2 Enoch* to the one found in Gen 14, the aim being to provide a continuous priestly succession from the antediluvian Melchizedek of *2 Enoch* to the postdiluvian Genesis Melchizedek, culminating with the priesthood of Christ, influenced by the Melchizedek material from Hebrews.[318]

2 Enoch provides the Melchizedek figure with something hitherto unprecedented: it narrates the remarkable aspects of the birth of Melchizedek in surprising detail. As we enter the story, Enoch has recently departed from this earth, and we find Methusalem praying to God at Akhuzan.[319] He seeks advice on the fate of the Enochian priesthood, now that its High Priest has been brought to heaven (69:5). In a dream vision, God informs Methusalem that he has been chosen to continue the Enochian priesthood. This position is, with time, passed to Methusalem's grandson, Nir (Ⱀиρ),[320] the second son of Lamech and the younger brother of Noa (Noah). However, the wickedness of mankind grows during Nir's reign as priest, and all hope for the future of humanity seems bleak as the Flood looms on the horizon (69–70).

Melkisedek the priests will be 12 in number until the great Igumen, that is to say, Leader, will bring out everything visible and invisible".

[317] Cf. Böttrich, "Melchizedek Story", 452–455.

[318] Ibid., 454; Harold W. Attridge, "Melchizedek in Some Early Christian Texts and 2 Enoch", in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only* (SJS 4; ed. Andrei A. Orlov, Gabriele Boccaccini, and Jason Zurawski; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 399–405.

[319] The gathered people have persuaded Methusalem to stand in front of the altar where, during the following night, he falls asleep. In a dream vision, God informs Methusalem that he has been chosen to be the new priest and to serve at God's altar at Akhuzan (69). Akhuzan in *2 Enoch* serves as a cryptic name for the temple mount in Jerusalem, a place that the text of *2 Enoch* consistently appears to legitimize as the primary place of worship, e.g., immediately following the departure of Enoch (68), Methusalem and his brothers erect an altar and perform animal sacrifices at this location. *2 Enoch* thus does not offer a critique of Jerusalem as a holy site, cf. Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, 327, yet it may contain polemical material concerning the temple located there, or of the current priesthood officiating at the temple; cf. Böttrich, "Melchizedek Story", 458, and the discussion of this proposition below.

[320] See Andrei A. Orlov, "Melchizedek Legend of 2 (Slavonic) Enoch", *JSJ* 31 (2000): 25n.6, for a discussion of the etymological origins of this enigmatic name.

Here the main story of Melchizedek's birth commences, heralding the beginning of the destruction of the world. Nir discovers that his wife, Sophonim (Софонима),[321] who is old and believed to be barren, is in fact pregnant. The two had not slept together during the 202 years that Nir had served as priest and, apparently, they had not spent much time together either, as Nir fails to discover the pregnancy until the day of the birth, when he suddenly remembers Sophonim and summons her. Discovering her condition, Nir reacts with anger, fuelled by the fear of being unclean before God and the shame he believes Sophonim has brought on him in front of the entire people. When Nir orders Sophonim to depart from his side, she collapses at his feet, dead from shame (and, perhaps, old age). Immediately, Nir hurries to seek the council of his brother, Noa. Together they agree that her death is actually a blessing, as it hides the shameful events. They then agree to go back, dig a grave, and secretly dispose of the body.[322]

As they return from their night of grave digging, they discover that a child has crawled out of Sophonim's womb. Initially, both Nir and Noa react in fright at the disturbing image of a three-year old boy, *fully formed of body*. The boy sits next to his mother's corpse, stroking his clothing, praising God, and with the *sign of priesthood* on his chest (presumably the ephod of a High Priest). The brothers observe the child and agree that he has been sent from God as a *renewal of the house of holy*, that is, of the priesthood. They proceed to wash the child and to dress him in priestly attire (presumably the same clothing that Methusalem presented to Nir when the priesthood was transformed), whereby the child is instated as a priest. They give him bread (which, as the text emphasizes, he eats, which may be a way of narrating that he is indeed a human being and not an angel), and name him Melchizedek.

Noa then councils his brother that, if people were to learn of the child's existence they would surely kill him, as the world has become evil. Nir asks God how to ensure Melchizedek a better destiny. God, again in a nightly vision, informs Nir that, although the people are evil and the Flood is rapidly approaching, he needs not fear for the safety of the child. In due time, God will send the angel Michael to bring Melchizedek to Paradise. Safe in Eden, Melchizedek will survive the catastrophe and become the priest of priests for all eternity.[323] While in paradise, God will make Melchizedek holy, and afterwards will give him a great people to lead, who in turn will praise God. The childless Nir then adopts Melchizedek, fully

[321] See ibid., 26n.8, for a discussion of this equally enigmatic name which appears in various forms in the manuscripts.

[322] MS U has *graves* in the plural, presumably one for Sophonim and one for the child.

[323] The choice of Michael as the angel may serve to differentiate between these two names, which, as we saw in the texts from Qumran, were often used synonymously. Again, MS U differs and supplies Gabriel instead.

inserting him in the genealogy of Enoch. And, as foretold, when forty days have passed, Michael brings Melchizedek to Eden and the Flood commences, bringing the text of *2 Enoch* to its conclusion.

This rather disturbing nativity story obviously presents a wide array of new and fascinating aspects, as well as a few elements that we have already encountered in the previous Melchizedek texts.[324] The initial question concerns how this story fits within the larger story arc of *2 Enoch*. Chapters 69–73, initiated by Methusalem's prayer to God to plead for a solution to the priestly situation, answer the need for a priestly mediator between Man and God that arose on Enoch's departure, and again when God destroys all living things during the Flood (with the exception of the lucky few who accompany Noa). The Melchizedek story provides a mediator sent to save mankind from evil and to offer atonement for sins.[325] This mediator figure is an assurance of God's deliverance and of the preservation of the purity of the elect people. In this, it differs from *1 Enoch*. Instead of the mediator figures of the Elect One (46:4–6), Enoch (*1 En.* 70–71; *2 En.* 64:5), and the Righteous One, who would awaken at the end of time (*1 En*. 91:10; 92:3–4), the author of the Melchizedek story may have had need of a further mediator. This new mediator in the form of the Melchizedek figure has become a combination of these others, as traces of at least the last two mediator figures from *1 Enoch* appear to have been combined into the figure of Melchizedek in *2 Enoch*.[326]

Inserted into the Enochian genealogy by Nir's adoption, Melchizedek is destined to become the saviour of mankind as a gift from God—and perhaps quite literally so, as Melchizedek may have been directly inserted into Sophonim by God: *Blessed be the Lord, the God of my fathers, who has told me how he has made a great priest in my day, in the womb of Sapanim, my wife* (J71:30).[327] Both Melchizedek's genealogy and his priesthood are further complicated by this direct involvement of God.

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[324] Andersen, "Enoch", 97, described the birth of Melchizedek as a traditional wonder story, although "made somewhat ridiculous to our taste by the circumstance of the spontaneous delivery of the infant from the mother's corpse".

[325] According to Gieschen, "Functions", 368, "The Melchizedek appendix (69–73) can be seen as a development growing out of 1–68 that addresses the evil of the postdiluvian situation by raising up a mediator figure. This need for a mediator like Melchizedek is a similar development to the need for a mediator figure present in the Similitudes (1 En. 37–71)".

[326] Indeed, the combination may have begun with the Righteous One from *1 En.* 91:10; 92:3–4, whose name may have brought the figure of Melchizedek to the attention of the authors of *2 Enoch* (in a parallel to the Teacher of Righteousness and what may have occurred at Qumran).

[327] MS A has a slightly different reading: *Blessed be the Lord, the God of my fathers, who has not condemned my priesthood and the priesthood of my fathers, because by his word he has created a great priest in the womb of Safonim, my wife.*

While the text does not provide the necessary details, it appears that there was no angelic involvement in the impregnation of Sophonim. This presents the impression that the birth of Melchizedek is the result of the direct involvement of God in the pregnancy.[328] What is clear from the text is that God indeed does take an active interest in the short forty-day span of earthly life of Melchizedek's first existence on earth. In addition, once he has been transported to safety in Paradise by Michael, *2 Enoch* has God personally make Melchizedek "holy", which presumably means that God instructs Melchizedek in his future priestly functions. This divine attention and involvement presents Melchizedek as a semidivine being. Yet although he is a true *Wunderkind*, there are no indications of Melchizedek having preexisted in the heavens, or of any similar notions. If the description of God's direct involvement is an original part of the story, then we here find an example of the divine impregnation of Sophonim, resulting in the Melchizedek figure being cast as a son of God whose mediatory activities will ensure the salvation of mankind. Having been taught by God, Melchizedek will return after the restoration of humanity following the Flood, in order to provide the priesthood needed to resume the proper cultic relationships with God. In its present shape, the Melchizedek story thus constitutes the climax of *2 Enoch*: it presents the saviour of humanity, created, taught, and sent by God to ensure the safety and deliverance of future generations. The reduced role of the Enoch figure's has also been noted by Fletcher-Louis, who noted that, while Adam was assigned the role of "king, but not priest" (J31:3; 58:3), Enoch was "priest, but not king" (22:8–10).[329] This construction leaves open the position of "king and priest", and the natural figure to fill this void within *2 Enoch* is Melchizedek. He is the priest who will reign in Akhuzan as king-priest (J 71:35; 72:6), the leader of a new and improved priesthood superior to both the Enochian and the Levitical priesthood.

The content of the Melchizedek story also smoothens over some of the exegetical problems encountered in the earlier Melchizedek rewritings. The first problem is the origin of the mysterious character met by Abraham in the Genesis account. In *2 Enoch*, the Melchizedek figure has been firmly tied to the family of Enoch, born of Sophonim, and adopted as a son by Nir.

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[328] Cf., e.g., Böttrich, "Melchizedek Story", 459, who finds that Melchizedek should be interpreted as the very direct creation of God. Melchizedek has no genealogy, but "enters this line from outside, from God's world". Böttrich argues that Melchizedek becomes part of the patriarchal lineage without ever becoming fully human—except from his brief incarnation of 40 days, his place is in the divine sphere, whereto he returns to stay "forever" (72:5).

[329] Fletcher-Louis, "New Perspectives", 144–148. If Fletcher-Louis' analysis is correct, this provides further proof of an overarching theological storyline within *2 Enoch*, and of the central position of the Melchizedek episode in the composition.

The story has thus established Melchizedek's genealogy by inserting him into this patriarch's lineage. The same applies to his priesthood. Melchizedek has, by divine commandment, become the heir to the priesthood given to Enoch, and afterwards held by Methusalem and Nir. This increased focus upon Melchizedek's family relations serves to situate the figure within the Enochian world and to guarantee his importance. With these changes to the genealogy of the now non-Canaanite Melchizedek, *2 Enoch* also explains that the reason Abraham gave tithe to Melchizedek was partly due to Melchizedek being his ancestor, and narrates how Melchizedek came to be a priest. As a consequence, the priesthood of Melchizedek, already older than the Levitical, now becomes more important than the Levitical, due to having its origin directly in God, who privately taught the first priest from whom all subsequent priests will be taught.

In *2 Enoch*, the figure of Melchizedek stars in a truly miraculous birth narrative, similar in ways to other ancient examples, but also differing notably. One difference is that the traditional angelic annunciation of the birth has been entirely omitted from the narrative, resulting in some very surprised parents. In addition, the concept of the child delivering itself from the corpse of its dead mother is, as far as I know, entirely unprecedented. As a result, the prodigy child "does not need care so much as interpretation", as Böttrich describes it, by Nir and Noa.[330] Assisting Nir and Noa in this interpretation are the indications of his priestly destiny—apart from the miraculous circumstances of his birth, and the fact that he is already a fully formed boy, Melchizedek's first action is to offer praise to God. Should these signs not be enough, there is the insignia of a High Priest on his chest. These elements assist the brothers' arrival at the conclusion that this child is indeed the renewal of the priesthood—an interpretation confirmed by the subsequent explanatory visions from God.

The definition of Melchizedek's priesthood is focused on in great detail, especially regarding the question of the sacerdotal aspects of the priestly succession. Scholars have argued that Melchizedek's priesthood is not a continuation of the Enochian priesthood, but rather an entirely new one.[331] However, since great importance is attributed to emphasizing that, although Melchizedek's priesthood is a renewed and improved version, it is also decidedly the continuation of the existing hereditary Enochian priesthood, we will disagree with this suggestion. Instead, it seems most plausible to interpret Melchizedek's priesthood as a representation of the continuation of the antediluvian Enochian priesthood into postdiluvian times, under the leadership of this miraculous being taught directly by God in Paradise. This

[330] Böttrich, "Melchizedek Story", 463.
[331] Cf. ibid., 459.

antediluvian priesthood will be centred on Melchizedek, and the content of the story serves primarily to detail the priestly antecedents of this ur-priest. In this way, it ensures the status of the priesthood, with Melchizedek becoming the "prototype of the earthly priesthood, belonging himself to the divine world".[332] As discussed, *2 Enoch* in its present state presents a polemical text that criticizes the established Levitical priesthood, though apparently it does not take issue with Jerusalem as a holy place, nor the temple as an institution. At the same time, Melchizedek also presents an alternative to Noah (and Shem), in what appears to be a deliberate polemical denigration of that particular branch of the family tree's cultic function.

This brings us to the questions of what sources and traditions influenced the Melchizedek story of *2 Enoch*, and whether it should be considered a polemical exegetical passage. The increased importance of the Melchizedek figure in *2 Enoch* has instigated a heated discussion of whether or not the passage was written as a polemical text against other traditions. The traditional bedrock of Judaism, the Mosaic Law, is throughout *2 Enoch* treated indifferently, similarly to what we find in *1 Enoch*. Yet *2 Enoch* does not seem to be directly engaged with the Mosaic traditions in a polemical way as much as it is providing evidence of an alternative Judaism.[333] The increased stature of Noachic law and the Enochian family in *2 Enoch* marks the Enochian text and its content as opposing the primacy of Moses, thereby revealing that there were at least two competing paradigms within Judaism.[334]

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[332] Cf. ibid., 460.

[333] Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, 256: "One can see that although the authors of the early Enochic narratives are well aware of the biblical Mosaic accounts and provide many details of these theophanic encounters, the event of the Torah's reception is either silenced altogether or its significance is markedly ignored". Enoch acting as an authority on religious law is something we also find elsewhere, e.g., *Jub*. 7:38–39; 21:10.

[334] Philip Alexander, "From Son of Adam to a Second God: Transformation of the Biblical Enoch", in *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible* (ed. Michael E. Stone and Theodore A. Bergen; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1998), 110: "Moses and Enoch are being set up in some sense as rivals, as representing competing paradigms of Judaism", and Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, 258–259: "This is why the non-biblical Mosaic lore demonstrates clear intentions of enhancing the exalted profile of its hero. This tendency detectable in the non-biblical Mosaic materials was not provoked solely by the rival Enochic developments, but was rather facilitated by the presence of a whole range of competitive exalted figures prominent in Second Temple Judaism. Still, the challenge of the pseudepigraphic Enoch to the biblical Moses cannot be underestimated, since the patriarch was the possessor of the alternative esoteric revelation reflected in the body of an extensive literature that claimed its supremacy over the Mosaic Torah".

As with the sidelining of Moses in *2 Enoch*, Noah also suffers a diminishment of his importance. Noah's roles and attributes are removed and given to others: for example, his role as the originator of animal sacrifices is usurped by Enoch and his sons.[335] Rather than continuing the priestly line in postdiluvian times, this honour is given to Nir's side of the family through his adopted son, Melchizedek. Methusaleh, Nir, and Melchizedek are the priests chosen by God. In addition, the traditions in which Noah receives divine revelations—found in both Hebrew Scripture and pseudepigrapha—have also been substituted. In *2 Enoch*, it is Methusaleh and Nir who are the primary recipients of the divine visions concerning the priestly succession and future events.[336] This represents a demotion of Noah, who is usurped as the traditional guarantor of a continued priestly succession by Nir's family line. This is emphasized by how Noah is not mentioned in the lengthy list of priestly genealogy (71:32). In addition, whereas Noah survives the Flood in an arc, Melchizedek survives these catastrophic events in Paradise, safeguarded by God, which also reveals the respective importance of the two figures in *2 Enoch*.

The polemical hammer has also struck Shem, son of Noah, who elsewhere became the traditional receiver of Noah's teachings (as in *Jub.* 10:13–14). The denigration of Noah is instituted by the dream vision from God to Methusaleh, in which he is told to pass the priesthood to the otherwise unknown Nir, rather than to Noah (70), thereby passing over Noah's son, Shem. Both father and son have thus become targets of the author's polemic. By focusing on Nir and his son Melchizedek, the Noah-Shem line is significantly reduced in importance.[337]

As to where this change originates from, it has been suggested that this story is a polemical rewriting of the Enochian version of the birth of Noah

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[335] Cf. Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, 304–333.

[336] Ibid., 311–312.

[337] This could be an early indication of the tension between the two figures of Shem and Melchizedek, which becomes apparent in the later rabbinic writings (which we will examine shortly), although Böttrich, "Melchizedek Story", 465, denies any connection with the later Shem traditions. Instead, Noa and Nir remain protagonists of equal rank, and *2 Enoch* exhibits no interest in the genealogy, as Melchizedek enters the line from outside as an eternal prototype. *2 Enoch* presents throughout a picture of a unified archaic mankind, with the leitmotif of the whole book being unity and consensus, not delimitation. As a consequence, Böttrich finds no polemical content aimed at the Noah traditions, and regards *2 Enoch* as presenting two parallel saviours—one who will be the physical saviour and one who will become the sacerdotal saviour. While Böttrich is correct in emphasizing that any polemical aspects of the text are not pronounced, we will continue to regard the text as containing a polemical stratum against the Noa-Shem line of the family, on account of the mention of Nir adopting Melchizedek and the focus of *2 Enoch* on Melchizedek as the primary priestly mediator and saviour figure.

(*1 En*. 106).[338] There are several similarities between the two nativity stories, in which each boy-child is born by autogenesis, is apparently of (semi)divine origin, immediately praises God upon birth, and in which the parents exhibit shame and anger that is soothed by divine visions of the child's important future function.[339] Yet there are enough discrepancies (such as Melchizedek delivering himself from a barren woman) to make a direct rewriting unlikely. The similarities may nonetheless indicate that the polemical transference of attributes from Noah to Melchizedek may have contributed to the present form of the nativity story in *2 Enoch*.

It has also been suggested that the story of Melchizedek's birth constitutes a rewriting of the birth of Christ, with the Melchizedek material from Hebrews providing the link between Melchizedek and Christ.[340] The death of Sophonim and Nir, as well as the idea that Melchizedek would live forever (72:5), would then be a reference to Heb 7:3 (ἀπάτωρ ἀμήτωρ and μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές). Melchizedek's escape to Eden and divine destiny to become the leader of a new priesthood, could thus have resulted from the conflict in Hebrews between the priesthoods of Levi and Melchizedek. Yet there are no literary allusions between *2 Enoch* and *Hebrews*. Without entering into the troublesome issue of which text was composed earlier, we can say that, apart from the concept of a divine mediator figure being born under miraculous circumstances (as was also the case with the Noah traditions), the birth narrative of Melchizedek is even less similar to that of Christ than it is to the birth story of Noah, and

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[338] Cf., e.g., A. Vailliant, *Le livre des secrets d'Hénoch: Texte slave et traduction française* (Paris: Institut d'Études Slaves, 1952), 75, Delcor, "Melchizedek", also saw an influence from the nativity-traditions of Noah, but from the version in the *Genesis Apocryphon* (col. II). There Noah's father, Lamech, believes his son's conception is the result of an meeting between an angel and his wife Bat-Enosh. Daphna Arbel, "On Adam, Enoch, Melchizedek, And Eve", in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only* (SJS 4; ed. Andrei A. Orlov, Gabriele Boccaccini, and Jason Zurawski; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 445–452, has recently suggested a different source of inspiration. Arbel suggests that *2 Enoch* inverts the traditions surrounding Eve and her association with sin, such as the mark of Cain (Gen 4:15), which is inverted and becomes the sign of priesthood on Melchizedek's chest.

[339] Cf. Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, 313–317.

[340] Cf., e.g., Vailliant, *Le livre*, ix, and Beverly A. Bow, "Melchizedek's Birth Narrative in 2 Enoch 68–73: Christian Correlations", in *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity* (ed. Randal A. Argall, Beverly A. Bow, and Rodney A. Werline; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2000), 33–41. Attridge, "Melchizedek", 399–409, suggests that the entire Melchizedek episode in *2 Enoch* was a polemical text against the Christian use of the figure in Hebrews. Based on our analysis, this appears unlikely, though it is more plausible that the two texts share elements because they serve a comparable purpose and were both directed at the Levitical Priesthood.

so there is little reason to suspect a connection between the traditions. Although the conflict between the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood based on Melchizedek features predominantly in both Hebrews and *2 Enoch*, this would appear to be more a case of parallel development than a literary dependency.

Regardless of where the inspiration came from, the narrative effects of these polemical aspects are clear, though the purpose they may have been inserted to serve is less apparent. Through this "systematic tendency to diminish or refocus the priestly significance of the figure of Noah"[341] (and of Shem), the sacerdotal and priestly functions have been removed from this line of the family and transferred to Nir and Melchizedek's branch. That the priestly prerogative remains with the Enoch family makes it plausible that *2 Enoch* was not only written to combat the views of outsiders on the Enochic traditions. Instead, it also provides evidence of an internal dispute in which the denigration serves to strengthen the characters of Methusaleh, Nir, and Melchizedek within the Enochian worldview. This may have been brought about by an increase in the importance of the figure of Noah to such an extent that he began to be seen as a potential rival to Enoch/Melchizedek (for example, in the Ethiopic text of the *Animal Apocalypse*). Such developments would have needed to be neutralized in order for the main characters of *2 Enoch* to shine.[342]

It is difficult to read the text without noting its emphasis on the figures of Nir and Melchizedek: they both appear as new figures in antediluvian times, inserted into the narrative at the expense of Noah and Shem. Both also have their own, more important roles, and while Shem is hardly mentioned, Noah merely plays a supporting role to Nir, with no notable interactions with God. When compared to Nir in particular, Noah's primary function in *2 Enoch* is to merely board the Ark at the right time. As a result, we may find *2 Enoch* to contain polemical aspects in substituting Noah with Nir and Shem with Melchizedek. The text, with its many possible polemical aspects, appears to be the work of a member of the Enochian movement who sought to reaffirm that priesthood in opposition to both a possible Noah-centred priesthood and the established Levitical priesthood in Jerusalem.[343] The latter purpose would be a continuation of elements from *1 Enoch* (see, for example, *1 En.* 80:73–75; 89:54–56; 90:28–36; 93:8), yet constitutes a more pronounced critique thanks to its strong focus on the figure of Melchizedek, who as the originator of this new priesthood imbues it with his authority.

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[341] Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, 318.
[342] Cf. ibid., 318–320.
[343] Cf. Gieschen, "Functions", 369.

3.10.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in *2 Book of Enoch*

In our analysis of the Melchizedek story from *2 Enoch*, we found an innovative interpretation of the figure. Following the departure of Enoch, after the inauguration of Methusalem, and towards the end of Nir's priestly service, Melchizedek enters the storyline as a priestly saviour figure. Without any explanation of the name—which indicates that the figure was well-known to both author and recipients—we are presented with a birth narrative, which makes it clear that this is the birth of an exalted being: entering the world through his own power, carrying priestly insignia on his chest, his initial actions leave little doubt as to the importance and future function of Melchizedek. The author transforms Melchizedek from a Canaanite, as in the Genesis story, to a member of the chosen lineage through Nir's adoption of him. However, the most significant part of Melchizedek's birth is that he was created by God directly in the womb of Sophonim. This exalted figure is thus established in the world by God, and while Melchizedek is said to live forever (72:5), his time on earth is initially limited to just 40 days. He is then brought to Eden to receive a private priestly education from God, before returning to establish the true priesthood that will serve as the only way to salvation for postdiluvian mankind.

This semidivine priest is the result of a mixture of material from Ps 110:4 and Gen 14:18–20 with a significant admixture of unique material, which may have been part of a larger tradition shared by the author and his recipients. This postdiluvian hero, the priest of all priests, serves the author in a number of ways. Within the narrative of *2 Enoch*, Melchizedek's primary function is to enable mankind's salvation as the cultic saviour. Without him, there would be no mediator to resume relations between God and humanity following the Flood. Following the departure of Enoch, the priests had been unable to prevent the people from becoming evil, thus revealing the need for an extraordinary exalted priest.

The Melchizedek story thus presents the aetiology of the true priesthood—its creation, its preservation, its divine assurance, and its improvement through the direct involvement of God. The result is a text that, as part of the exalted category of interpretation, presents a sectarian political theology: the author has established his chosen priesthood as superior to both the preceding Enochic and Noachic priesthoods, as well as to the Levitical priesthood. Through the Melchizedek figure, our author constructs a superior alternative—a creation myth of the true priesthood. *2 Enoch* thus shares its focus on the exalted priestly Melchizedek figure with the earlier examples of the exalted interpretative category and their

polemical attitude towards the *Anstalt*. Yet these similarities (such as the salvation of the faithful through the actions of Melchizedek)) appear to be a case of parallel developments, as there are no direct literary connections and there does not appear to be a strong case for any connections with contemporary Christian traditions. The similarities more plausibly derive from a shared exegetical milieu and from the common sectarian need to demonstrate a superior priesthood. Through the extensive use of the Melchizedek figure, the author provides a thoroughly priestly and cultic saviour figure with which to polemicize the traditional *Anstalt* and present a superior priesthood. The exalted Melchizedek figure is again instrumental in these endeavours.

3.11 The Epistle to the Hebrews

3.11.1 Introduction to the Epistle to the Hebrews

The Epistle to the Hebrews has best been described as "the most elegant and sophisticated, and perhaps the most enigmatic, text of first-century Christianity".[344] Elegant in its theological treatment of Christianity and sophisticated in its use of the Greek language, Hebrews remains enigmatic, as few things are known regarding its origin. What makes Hebrews even more baffling is its extensive use of the figure of Melchizedek in its central exegetical discussion, as it is the only text in the New Testament to even mention the figure.

The authorship of the epistle has been debated since the time of Clement: while the earliest sources categorized Hebrews as a Pauline letter, Clement attributed the text to one of Paul's assistants.[345] Centuries later, in the wake

[344] Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Fortress Press, 1989), 1, who adds to his praise of Hebrews that it is a "masterpiece of early Christian rhetorical homiletics".

[345] In the Chester Beatty papyrus (which has preserved Heb 1:1–9:16; 9:18–10:20; 10:22–30; 10:32–13:25), it is part of the Pauline letters included after Romans; cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, 3, and Luke T. Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2006). Hebrews continued to be regarded as a Pauline epistle, and Theodoret of Cyrus could, in the 5th century, describe the idea that it was not written by Paul as a "disease"; cf. Robert C. Hill, *Theodoret of Cyrus: Commentary of the Letters of St. Paul. Volume Two* (Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001), 136–137. Clement believed that Luke translated the original letter into Greek from Paul's Hebrew. Origin was more reserved in this question, and concluded that only God knows who wrote Hebrews (Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.25.14); cf. Johnson,

of historical criticism, the idea that Hebrews was written by Paul or one of his associates has become the minority position, mainly due to the text's particular rhetorical style, its unique theological ideas (such as the focus on Jesus as High Priest), and the author's modest self-designation (2:3).[346]

Hebrews' date of composition also remains disputed. With *1 Clement's* use of Hebrews, we may set a tentative *terminus ad quem* to either 96 or 115, depending on the date of *1 Clement*.[347] The *terminus a quo* has traditionally been set to ca. 60 C.E., owing to the author's distancing himself from the initial receivers of the gospel (2:3), and his comments on the recipients of the letter having been in the faith for some time (e.g. 5:12). Within this time period, the most plausible date of the composition appears to be before 70 C.E., primarily because of the references to cultic activities in the present tense (e.g. 7:27–28) and the apparent lack of any mention of the destruction of the temple, even though this would have suited the authors' arguments remarkably well.[348]

Hebrews, 3–6. The Pauline connection was later advocated by the Eastern Church (e.g., Dionysius of Alexandria, according to Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.41.6), and by Augustine and Jerome in the Western Church; cf. Frederick F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes* (ed. Frederick F. Bruce; The New International Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964), 22–25, and Johnson, *Hebrews*, 3–7.

[346] Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, 2n.11–12; 4–5, and Bruce, *Epistle*, 14–20, for a detailed overview of the last advocates of Paul and his assistants (the primary candidates being Jude, Luke, Barnabas, Apollos, Priscilla, Aquila, Silas, and Epaphras).

[347] The major argument for dating *1 Clement* to 96 C.E. (the connection with the Domitian persecutions) has been deemed void by a number of scholars; cf., e.g., John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Westminster Press, 1976), and Attridge, *Hebrews*, 6–8. This would adjust the *terminus ad quem* to between 70 and 140 C.E.

[348] While both Josephus (*A.J.* 3:224–36) and Clement (*1 Clem* 41) similarly discuss the Tabernacle in the present tense following its destruction, this does not invalidate the significance of this argument. Rather, it shows that the date of Hebrews should not rely on this completely; cf. Gleason, "Angels", 94. Among the scholars who have favoured a pre-70 date are Bruce, *Epistle*, 21, who argues that "the epistle was written before, but not long before, the outbreak of persecution in Rome in A.D. 65"; George W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews: Translation, Comment and Conclusions* (AB 36; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972), 261; Gleason, "Angels", 95; and Barnabas Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 19–21, who finds it "almost inconceivable" that the author would not have mentioned the destruction of the Temple if Hebrews is post-70, as this would have "clinched his argument" (ibid.,20). Cf. also Johnson, *Hebrews*, 227, who states that "there is no reason for dating this composition after the fall of the Jerusalem temple in 70". Other scholars have found the arguments to be inconclusive (primarily owing to ancient authors referring to cultic activities in the present tense after 70 C.E. (see above)), and due to the high Christology of the letter, along with parallels to other texts after 70, regard a date between 70 and 90 as more likely, e.g., Simon Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker,

A final riddle that Hebrews presents to scholars is who the intended addressees were and where they were located. The answers to these question have again been hampered by the sparse hints in the text, but among the contenders for the geographic location of the intended recipients are Palestine (Jerusalem) and Rome.[349] With regards to the nature of the audience, multiple hypotheses have been offered, ranging from Gentiles to unconverted Essenes.[350] Yet based on the author's comments regarding his recipients (3:6, 16; 4:14; 10:23), a group of converted early Christians seems most plausible, although it is still debated whether these were converted Gentiles, Jews, or perhaps a mix of both. The primary arguments for the recipients having converted from Judaism include the perceived ties to a Hellenistic Judaism, a halachic observance, the extensive use of Hebrew Scripture, and Hebrews' general focus on providing a reinterpretation of the cultic traditions of Judaism.[351] On the other hand, it has been argued that a Gentile-Christian audience would provide an explanation of Hebrews' attention to the delayed parousia and similar theological concepts.[352]

What we may deduce from this is that the author, and presumably also his recipients, were early Christians, and had been for some time (5:12); that the community had been persecuted because of their faith (10:32–34); that it had experienced reduced attendance at the communal assembly (perhaps induced by external pressure or from disappointment about the delay of parousia (10:25)).[353] Righting this perceived lack of piety may have been the original purpose of the letter, as Hebrews centres on an exhortation to continued faithfulness and to further study of the mysteries of Christianity. Thus, the riddle that is Hebrews consists of a letter written between ca. 60 and 70 C.E. by an early Christian male author (11:32) who,

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1984), 16; and Kenneth Schenck, *Understanding the Book of Hebrews: The Story Behind the Sermon* (London: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 107; For a review of the discussion, see Attridge, *Hebrews*, 8–13.

[349] Jerusalem, the choice of most ancient commentators (e.g., Chrysostom, *Patres Graeci* 63:9–14), remains a possibility; cf. Buchanan, *Hebrews*, 255–256. Yet Rome may be the strongest candidate, on account of the use of material from Hebrews found in *1 Clem* 36:2–6, believed to originate in Rome; cf. Schenck, *Hebrews*, 109. Further possibilities are mentioned and debated by Bruce, *Epistle*, 10–14; Robinson, *Redating*, 205–213; Attridge, *Hebrews*, 9–10; and Johnson, *Hebrews*, 34–35.

[350] Cf. James Moffat, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1924), xvi–xvii, for a scholar who favours the first suggestion. The latter has been argued by Hans Kosmala, *Hebräer-Essener-Christen: Studien zur Vorgeschichte der frühchristlichen Verkundigung* (StPB 1; ed. P. A. H. de Boer; Leiden: Brill, 1959), and Longenecker, "Melchizedek", 175.

[351] Cf., e.g., Bruce, *Epistle*, 6.

[352] See Attridge, *Hebrews*, 10–11, and Johnson, *Hebrews*, 33, for a list of references to scholars who have argued these, and other, opinions.

[353] Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, 12.

well-versed in rhetoric, Greek philosophy, and in the Jewish scripture,[354] addressed an audience of early Christians in order to strengthen their faith.

Throughout Hebrews, the author cites and alludes to numerous passages from Hebrew Scripture, frequently in combination (such as in ch. 1, where Psalms 2 and 110 are used to support each other). Psalms 8, 50, 95, and 110 constitute the primary sources for the majority of the argumentation.[355] The structure of the argument has been the subject of much scholarly debate, and numerous attempts to provide a consistent structural hierarchy have been made.[356] However, one of the primary focal points of Hebrews is the discussion of the figure of Melchizedek. This serves as a temporary culmination of the preceding discussion of the priesthood of Christ in 2:17–31 and 4:14–5:10, while simultaneously serving to prepare the way for the following chapters. As a result, Hebrews has been described in jest as merely "the book about Melchizedek", but in its text, we also find numerous other unique and sophisticated arguments that illuminate the author's theology.[357] Indeed, Hebrews may be better characterized as a lengthy, sustained interpretation of the riddle posed by Christ's death. While a complete analysis of this early masterpiece of Christian literature is outside the scope of this research, an overview of some of the key concepts of Hebrews may facilitate a better understanding of the author's use of the

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[354] Cf. ibid., 5–6. Bligh instead argues that perhaps there were two authors behind Hebrews; "one of whom sketched out the argument, perhaps in poor Greek, and then gave his work to a stylist to be worked over and rewritten in good Greek". John Bligh, "The Structure of Hebrews", in *Heythrop Journal* 5 (London: Heythrop College, 1964), 176. The extensive use of the Hebrew Scripture appears to indicate a convert from Judaism who shared several of the core beliefs advocated by the Pauline school; cf. Bruce, *Epistle*, 20, who calls the author a "second-generation" convert.

[355] George H. Guthrie, "'Hebrews' Use of the Old Testament: Recent Trends in Research", *Currents in Biblical Research* 1:2 (2003): 271–272 "Replete with quotations, allusions, general references and echoes, Hebrews packs more of the Old Testament into its complex discourse than any other New Testament writing [. . .]. Simply stated, the use to which Hebrews has put the Old Testament are the book's bone and marrow". According to Simon Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Amsterdam: Wed. G. van Soest, 1961), 16, who found approx. 32 direct citations, "Every citation has been chosen to fill out his theological motifs; and every citation manifests this purpose" (ibid., 150). Cf. Bernard H. J. Combrink, "Some Thoughts on the Old Testament Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews", in *Ad Hebraeos: Essays on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Neotestamentica 31:5 (Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 1971), 31; and Susan Docherty, "The Text Form of the OT Citations in Hebrews Chapter 1 and the Implications for the Study of the Septuagint", *NTS* 55 (2009): 358.

[356] For a fuller discussion of the structure of Hebrews, see Bligh, "The Structure of Hebrews", 171–173, who argued that the center of Hebrews lies in 9:1–14 (more precisely, with the name "Christ" in 9:11), and Attridge, *Hebrews*, 13–21.

[357] Bruce, *Epistle*, xi.

figure of Melchizedek and the figure's relation to the overall purpose of the text.

The first key concept to examine is Hebrews' prominent use of angels. The author defines the nature of Christ in his opening statement, which affirms Christ as the preexisting Son (1:5). Christ is then compared favourably to the angels, as the one who has *inherited a more excellent name than they* (1:4 διαφορώτερον παρ' αὐτοὺς κεκληρονόμηκεν ὄνομα).[358] Through the designation ὁ θεὸς in 1:8, the author further affirms Christ as exalted high above all creation as the uncreated cocreator of the heavens and the earth—as a king placed on the right hand of God. Christ was to be placed lower than the angels as a human being, though only for a short time (2:9), and was to suffer death in order to make atonement with God possible.[359]

With little to indicate that the recipients of Hebrews were participating in any type of angel-worship, the angelological discussion appears rather to serve as a refutation of the increased focus on angels as personal and national saviours in Second Temple Judaism.[360] Indeed, angels are natural beings with which to compare Christ. They emphasize his superior status on account of the way contemporary angelologies had evolved (as we have witnessed in the previous texts) and the increased significance given to angels in their new capacities as high priests, divine warriors, and primary intercedents to the throne of God. Hebrews attempts to convey to its recipients the need to rely solely on Christ who, as the true Son of God, is shown to be vastly superior to any angel. The inclusion of the angels thus serves primarily as an application of the rhetorical convention of synkrisis with which to exalt the figure of Christ. As a result, there is in Hebrews neither speculation about nor room for any angelic leaders, priestly or warriorlike, and no angelic army will arrive to save the chosen people. Hebrews emphasizes how these functions, which had with time become a hallmark of angels, will be fulfilled by Christ, who is both the "national"

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[358] Greek text from Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27. rev. Auf. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993).

[359] One may, with Bruce, *Epistle*, 3, use the term "inaugurated eschatology" to describe the worldview of Hebrews; the Son's eschatological rule was inaugurated by his enthronement at the right side of God (1:3), but is not yet fully so, as 2:8 and 10:12–13 indicate.

[360] Instead of a refutation of an angelic Christology or of angelic veneration (as evidenced by the lack of any prohibitions against such veneration or denial of an angelomorphic Christ), it is more likely a rhetorical device for further exalting Christ; cf. Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology: A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (WUNT 2:70 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995), 121–129; Attridge, *Hebrews*, 51–53; and Gleason, "Angels", 100–101.

and the personal saviour. In Hebrews, all the primary functions of angels have been appropriated by Christ. It is thus Christ who will save the faithful.

One of the primary functions appropriated by the Christ figure in Hebrews is our second key concept for discussion—namely, that Hebrews presents Christ as the celestial High Priest.[361] The author of Hebrews established the kingship of Christ in chapter 1 through extensive citations of the Psalms (primarily 2:7 and 110:1, but also 45:6f and 102:25ff), and by 5:1–10, he has progressed to the next level of his argument, which indicates that Christ is also the High Priest. Christ is the new and permanent High Priest (7:11–28), through whose self-sacrifice the possibility of atonement for sins is provided (1:3; 9:11–14; 10:10–14). The author's argument reminds his audience that, although they have realized that Christ is king, they must also understand the more difficult concept that his priestly role and functions entail: Christ is the true High Priest officiating in the heavenly sanctuary—an aspect which was left undeveloped by the rest of the New Testament.[362] In Hebrews, Christ the High Priest substitutes for the desecrated Temple of Jerusalem (3:1–6; 10:21) and provides access to the heavenly Jerusalem and its true tabernacle (8:1–10:18; 12:22–24; 13:14). Christ thus exchanges the old, inadequate Levitical priesthood for a new, holier, priesthood. This focal point of Hebrews fits well into the contemporary longing for a renewed priesthood and temple found in other Second Temple Judaism texts, and with the Platonic idea that earthly institutions are copies of the heavenly archetypes.[363]

The exposition upon the priestly Christ begins with his work of atonement, mentioned briefly in 2:17, repeated in 4:14–5:10, and further developed in later chapters with the figure of Melchizedek representing the heart of the discussion. The author was apparently hesitant about his use of the figure of Melchizedek: following the initial introduction in 5:6, he turns

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[361] The term "priest" is used when referring to Christ in the context of Melchizedek, while "high priest" is primarily used when discussing Christ and the Levitical priesthood. In addition, the author uses the term "great priest" to emphasize the combination of priestly and royal aspects in Christ (e.g., 10:21); cf. Kistemaker, *Psalm Citations*, 142–143.

[362] The idea of Christ as a priest is found elsewhere in the New Testament (e.g., Rom 8:34, in which Christ intercedes on behalf of the faithful in a passage that may be alluding to Ps 110:1). Yet Hebrews is far more explicit in its discussion of the priestly function of Christ; cf. ibid., 117–121; Olaf Moe, "Das Priesterthum Christi im NT Ausserhalb des Hebräerbriefes", *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 72 (1947): 335–337; Oscar Cullmann, *Christology of the New Testament* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Westminster Press, 1959), 104–107; Hugh Montefiore, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 95–96; Buchanan, *Hebrews*, 98–100; Delcor, "Melchizedek", 126–127; and Longenecker, "Melchizedek", 173.

[363] Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, 222–224, and Gleason, "Angels", 92.

to two confessional insertions (5:7; 5:8–9) before returning to the core of the discussion in 5:10. Yet hardly has the author mentioned the priesthood of Melchizedek when he again halts his argumentation to rebuke his audience (5:11b–6:20). Then, apparently satisfied that he has sufficiently "awakened" his readers, the author returns to Melchizedek with full force throughout chapter 7. While it appears that the author of Hebrews took his audience's familiarity with the Psalms he uses for granted, this seems not to be the case with the Melchizedek arguments based on Ps 110:4 (cf. 5:12–6:12). The author may thus be arguing for positions that he believes to be new to his recipients, or that represent areas in which they have erred. It appears the author wanted to emphasize that the correct understanding of Ps 110:4 was fundamental to the understanding of the entire text of Hebrews, at the centre of which lies the figure of Melchizedek. Combined, these hesitations and the effort exerted to ensure the recipients' attention to his exposition all serve to further reveal the central importance of Melchizedek in the author's effort to identify and define Christ as the true High Priest.

3.11.2 Melchizedek in the Epistle to the Hebrews

The author of Hebrews begins his exposition on the Melchizedek figure by retelling its narrative background from Gen 14:18–20. He then employs Psalm 110 to further define the relationship between Christ and Melchizedek and between the priesthood of Melchizedek and the Levitical. The author then follows the narrative structure of the Genesis account, but rewrites the passage in a number of ways: he deletes certain elements (the geographical location in the Valley of Shaveh, the offer of bread and wine, and the words of the blessings) while inserting others, such as the etymological interpretation of the name as βασιλεὺς δικαιοσύνης (*king of righteousness*), and the title βασιλεὺς εἰρήνης (*king of peace*). The version in Hebrews also emphasizes some narrative elements in a different manner than the original account may have intended (for example, that it was Abraham who tithed Melchizedek). Although each constitutes a minor change, all serve to exalt the figure of Melchizedek at the expense of Abraham.

The most significant exegetical addition, however, is the notion that Melchizedek is *without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God* (7:3: ἀπάτωρ ἀμήτωρ ἀγενεαλόγητος, μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν μήτε ζωῆς τέλος

ἔχων, ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ). This unique insertion transforms Melchizedek from a mortal human into an eternal priest, a change which is also supported by other comments, such as 7:3, *he remains a priest forever* (μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές). As we have witnessed no similar tradition elsewhere, this argument appears to have been arrived at following the principle of *non in thora non in mundo*—a common concept employed by first-century exegetes.[364] The author uses the addition in his exposition on Melchizedek primarily to invert the Genesis *Vorlage* to demonstrate the superiority of Melchizedek over Abraham: Abraham gave tithe to Melchizedek, Abraham was blessed by Melchizedek, and Abraham (and his descendants, notably the priests) was mortal, whereas the life of Melchizedek is without end.

According to the author of Hebrews, the Melchizedek of Genesis was a priest *made like the Son of God* (7:3 ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ). Because this goes against the customs of the established Levitical priesthood, the author admits that it is a difficult subject (5:11: δυσερμήνευτος). The traditional priesthood with the privilege of serving as intermediaries and offering sacrifices to God had been identified with the Levitical priesthood (cf. Exod 28–29; Lev 8–10; Num 16–18; Ezra 2:61–63; Neh 7:63–65), and such a genealogy had become a prerequisite for serving God as a priest. The author uses Psalm 110 to modify this traditional understanding. He interprets the resurrected Christ as the recipient of the first verse (*Take a seat at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool at your feet*), with the seat being the one at the right-hand side of God in heaven (1:13, 8:1, and 10:12; cf. Rom 8:34 and 1 Cor 15:25). This assumption then leads the author to conclude that 110:4 is also directed at Christ. Having explained who Melchizedek is on the basis of the narrative from Genesis—a figure enhanced through his own unique additions—the author can then begin to further illuminate the connection between Melchizedek and Christ, and what this entails for his Christology.

In chapters 5 and 7, the author explores the concept of the superiority of the priesthood of Christ over the apparently still functioning Levitical priesthood. The argument rests heavily upon Psalm 110, a very significant Psalm for the author, who also quotes it directly in 1:13 and alludes to it in 1:3, 8:1, 10:12, and 12:2. While Psalm 110 is the most frequently cited Psalm in the New Testament, being primarily interpreted as messianic in nature, it is only in Hebrews that we find any part of verse four explicitly used.[365] This verse, through the author's exegesis, presents Christ as *having*

[364] Cf., e.g., Longenecker, "Melchizedek", 176.

[365] According to Margaret Barker, "The High Priest and the Worship of Jesus", in *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism* (JSJSup 63; ed. C. N. Carey, James R.

become a high priest after the order of Melchizedek (6:20 κατὰ τὴν τάξιν [366] Μελκισέδεκ ἀρκιερεὺς γενόμενος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). The primary exegesis of Ps 110:4 (7:1–25) is presented in two divisions, each defining a different part of Ps 110:4. The first division (7:1–12) expounds upon the meaning of the words *priest after the order of Melchizedek* (ἀρκιερεὺς κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελκισέδεκ), while verses 7:13–25 focus on *you are a priest forever* (σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). Each division may be subdivided into two parts: 7:1–3 discusses the name Melchizedek and its historical setting; the word ἱερεὺς and the priestly order are the topic of 4–13a; the recipient of the verse is addressed in 13b–14; and the epithet of εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα is the subject of 15–25.[367] This structure allows the author to initially detail the narrative material from Genesis in 7:1–12, before applying it to his exegetical exposition of Christ's priesthood.

The author of Hebrews interprets Ps 110:4 as a messianic prophecy, and Melchizedek as a type of Christ. Melchizedek is described in 7:3 as *made like* (ἀφωμοιωμένος) the Son of God, and Christ is said to have arisen as a priest according to the likeness of Melchizedek in 7:15 (εἰ κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα Μελκισέδεκ ἀνίσταται ἱερεὺς ἕτερος).[368] The author of Hebrews

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Davila, and Gladys S. Lewis; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 98n.9, the twenty allusions or quotations from Ps 110 in the New Testament are Matt 22:44; 26:64; Mark 12:36; 14:62 (16:19); Luke 20:42f.; 22:69; Acts 2:33f.; 5:31; 7:55f.; Rom 8:34; 1 Cor 15:25; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3,13; 8:1; 10:12f.; 12:2; 1 Pet 3:22. Cf. also Hay, *Glory*, 29, who mentions that all ancient Christian uses of Ps 110 interpret it messianically, and Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 85–87.

[366] The precise interpretation of this difficult word has consistently troubled translators. Concerning its translation, Paul Ellingworth, "The Unshakable Priesthood: Hebrews 7.24", *JSNT* 23 (1985): 126, has argued that it would be "simpler and more probable" to simply render it "(a priest) like (Melchizedek)". However, the most accurate description of the term and its meaning may be that of Attridge, *Hebrews*, 202, who states "[t]he 'order' of Melchizedek is not a matter of lineage or human authorization. The phrase implies a 'similarity' at a deeper level. By being in the 'order' of Melchizedek, Christ is a priest in the realm of the eternal and unchanging"; Cf. also Johnson, *Hebrews*, 184.

[367] Cf. Kistemaker, *Psalm Citations*, 118.

[368] Barker, *High Priest*, 113, provides a unique interpretation of the Melchizedek figure within Hebrews. In this, the figure was apparently not eternal, but rather died and was resurrected: "There is evidence in the Letter to the Hebrews that the Melchizedek high priest was believed to be resurrected, that is, living the life of heaven rather than of this earth". Barker's interpretation is primarily based upon the ἀνίστημι used twice in connection with Melchizedek in Hebrews. She argues that this should not be understood as "arisen", but instead as "resurrected". Barker's interpretation is not supported by the text, its theological intention, or any of the later traditions.

thus applies all that is said of Melchizedek in Psalm 110 to Christ.[369] Yet the part of the exposition considered by the author to be most difficult concerns the superiority of the Melchizedek priesthood over the traditional priesthood. To demonstrate this point, the author compares Abraham and Melchizedek, twice pointing out the superiority of Melchizedek. Abraham was the one who gave a tenth of the spoils to Melchizedek, and it was Melchizedek who blessed Abraham: both actions prove to the author that Melchizedek was the patriarch's superior (7:4–7). Because Abraham is the forefather of Levi, his deferential actions and their import are also transferable to Levi, who thus also gave tithe to Melchizedek, being as he was in the loins of Abraham (7:9–10). The priesthood of Melchizedek is also characterized as perpetual through Ps 110:4, whereas the Levites are mortal men whose priesthood continually terminates in the death of each priest. According to the author, these three points demonstrate that the Melchizedek priesthood is superior to the Levitical one—a priesthood whose end is signalled by the arrival of the one true priest, Christ (7:11–19). The Levitical priesthood thus existed as a temporary solution to the absence of the perfect priest and, his arrival necessitates a change in the law (7:11–15) whereby the previous commandment is set aside *because of a lack of power and uselessness* (7:18 διὰ τὸ αὐτῆς ἀσθενὲς καὶ ἀνωφελές).

In 7:13–25, the author supplies four details of Christ's priesthood, based on his exegesis of Psalm 110. Initially admitting (13–14) that Christ belongs to the tribe of Judah, and thus to a lineage traditionally lacking priests, the author argues (15–19) that the solution to this is found in the text of 110:4, a verse describing Christ: *For it is confirmed (of him) "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek"* (μαρτυρεῖται γὰρ ὅτι σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελκισέδεκ). Christ's priesthood accords not with the Mosaic Law, because it constitutes a different kind. Christ is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, whose superiority and guarantee by divine oath (7:20) invalidates the existing law.[370] As the third sign, this divine oath affirms the superiority of Melchizedek's priesthood over the Levitical, which received no such oath from God. Christ thus (7:22) *has become the guarantee of a better covenant* (κρείττονος διαθήκης γέγονεν ἔγγυος).[371] The priesthood of

[369] Cf. Kistemaker, *Psalm Citations*, 122: "Christ, though fulfilling both the priesthood of Aaron and that of Melchizedek, has his prototype in the person and office of the latter".
[370] Cf. ibid., 119.
[371] The author has elsewhere "referred to the divine oath which excludes all doubt, and which is a guarantee to the content of the promise given (3:11,18; 4:3; and 6:13ff.)", ibid.

Christ, through its superiority, thus provides a better covenant, annulling (parts of) the law, and its priest and priesthood shall last eternally (7:24).

The reason for the use of Melchizedek in Hebrews appears to be based on the author's understanding of the life and worship of Israel as a typology of the Christian era—an "anticipation-consummation" theme.[372] A wide range of scripture is used throughout Hebrews to answer the questions of who Melchizedek was, what the connections are between Melchizedek and Christ, and what the implications of this are for the priesthood of Christ. Behind this line of questioning, we may discern two assumptions held by the author: that 110:4 should be interpreted as messianic, and that the Melchizedek figure is of the utmost importance to the principal argument.[373] Throughout the author's use of the Melchizedek figure, we may also discern not just an interest in the priestly qualifications of the figure, as has been argued,[374] but also in the "person" of Melchizedek, as revealed by 7:4 *Now observe how great this person was* (Θεωρεῖτε δὲ πηλίκος οὗτος).

The author's description of and focus on the person of Melchizedek is at the crux of the debate concerning the identity of the sources that may or may not have influenced the author. And while much can be written (and indeed has) regarding the possible influences on Hebrews, in the case of the Melchizedek figure, the scholarly discussion can be narrowed down to the following question: Can we detect influences from the writings by Philo or from the texts found at Qumran? However, Hebrews' relation to *2 Enoch* may well become the next arena of battle as a logical consequence of the broader acceptance of the early date of *2 Enoch* and the similarities previously discussed.

The argument that Hebrews was influenced by Philo relies primarily on the general similarities between the mix of Semitic cosmology and Platonic metaphysics found in the works of both authors.[375] Moreover, while most scholars agree that there are intriguing similarities,[376] any attempt at

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[372] Cf. Longenecker, "Melchizedek", 174–175.
[373] Cf. ibid., 175.
[374] Cf. Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das neue Testament; Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1957), 162–163, and Horton, *Melchizedek*, 162–163.
[375] Cf., e.g., Ceslaus Spicq, "L'Épître aux Hébreux, Apollos, Jean-Baptiste, les Hellénistes et Qumrân", *RevQ* 1:3 (1959): 365–390, (although he later came to favour an influence from the texts found at Qumran); and Gregory E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography* (NovTSup 64; Leiden: Brill, 1992).
[376] Cf., e.g., Johnson, *Hebrews*, 18–21, and Attridge, *Hebrews*, 28–29.

positing a direct dependence remains inconclusive.[377] Concerning the treatment of the Melchizedek figure by the two authors, the similarities are primarily the etymological treatment of the title and the name. However, these are on so common a level that they cannot be used to prove any connection without overstressing the evidence. Beyond the shared etymological treatments of the name, there remains little common ground between Hebrews and Philo on the figure of Melchizedek that might not be ascribed to the material available in Hebrew Scripture and to influences from a shared hermeneutical climate.

The same appears to be the case with the suggestion of influences from the Qumran scrolls. The discoveries of these scrolls, especially of 11Q13 and its exalted Melchizedek figure, kicked off a flood of articles positing a direct connection to the figure in Hebrews.[378] Joseph A. Fitzmyer remained more cautious, and suggested that the traditions were not directly linked, but rather that such "associations make the comparison in Hebrews between Jesus the high priest and Melchizedek all the more intelligible. The tradition is not the same; but what we have in 11 Q Melch at least

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[377] Cf. Sidney G. Sowers, *The Hermeneutics of Philo and Hebrews: A Comparison of the Interpretation of the Old Testament in Philo Judaeus and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Zürich: EVZ, 1965), 137; Williamson, *Philo*, 538, who concludes that Hebrews "differs radically from the outlook and attitude of Philo [. . .] the Writer of Hebrews [does not] appear to owe anything to Philo"; Combrink, "Some Thoughts", 25; Longenecker, "Melchizedek", 172; Attridge, *Hebrews*, 28–29; and Johnson, *Hebrews*, 18–21.

[378] Cf. van der Woude and Jonge, "11Q Melchizedek", 322–323, who concluded that instead of searching for "Hellenistic Jewish, Gnostic and/or Philonic traditions" behind Hebrews' depiction of Melchizedek, as had been argued by some scholars (e.g., Erich Grässer, "Der Hebräerbrief 1938–1963", *Theologische Rundschau* 30 [1964]: 215), it was necessary to search elsewhere as it was "influenced by notions which are also found in Qumran while the Heavenly Son of God . . . his counterpart is the heavenly Melchizedek, whom we find in 11Q Melch"; van der Woude and Jonge, "11Q Melchizedek", 322–323. Others have argued that the author of Hebrews used the figure of Melchizedek to prove Christ's superiority over the exalted Melchizedek evident in Qumran—an angelic figure of high-priestly status—and the author of Hebrews, according to Longenecker, "Melchizedek", 177, thus "acknowledges the legitimacy of considering Melchizedek a heavenly figure of continuing priestly significance". This view is also held by Kosmala, *Hebräer-Essener-Christen*; David Flusser, "The Dead Sea Sect and Pre-Pauline Christianity", *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 4 (1958): 215–266; Combrink, "Some Thoughts", 32; Bruce, *Epistle*, 7–8; and Balla, *Melchizedekian*, 66, who finds that "Melchizedek is a divine figure for the author [of Hebrews]" and that the author knew the traditions in 11Q13. For a full discussion of the issue of possible connections between the Qumran scrolls and Hebrews, see Irwin W. Batdorf, "Hebrews and Qumran: Old Methods and New Directions", in *Festschrift to Honor F. Wilbur Gingrich, Lexicographer, Scholar, Teacher, and Committed Christian Layman*, (ed. Eugene H. Barth and Ronald E. Cocroft; Leiden: Brill, 1972), 16–35.

furnishes new light on the comparison".[379] Fitzmyer's position thus implies that the traditions are not directly connected, but instead stem from a similar cultural sphere, and may be fruitfully used to illuminate each other.[380]

Others have argued that the author of Hebrews created his exegesis on Melchizedek in an "exegetical vacuum", lacking any influences apart from earlier Christian exegesis.[381] Considering the sheer number of Melchizedek traditions that we have examined and have yet to examine and the lack of any mention of the figure in contemporary Christian texts, we can deem this hypothesis untenable. That the author of Hebrews, apparently well versed in both Scripture and contemporary Second Temple Judaism ideology, would not, at least to some extent, have been aware of the Melchizedek traditions appears unlikely at best, considering the importance attributed to the figure and the additions in 7:3. It also appears unlikely that the author would choose this particular figure on which to base his primary exegetical reasoning for the existence of Christ's priesthood if he were not aware, at least to some extent, of the exalted developments that the figure of Melchizedek had undergone in contemporary sources. The extent of the author's (and perhaps also the addressees') knowledge of these traditions remains unknown, but based on the preceding discussion, there appears to be a degree of familiarity with the exalted exegesis that the figure had elsewhere undergone.

To what extent does this familiarity extend, and was the author's exegesis influenced by the traditions we have examined so far? It does not in its entirety follow any of the other traditions consistently, nor does it seem to explicitly offer any polemical material against these, apart from its appropriation of the figure for Christian purposes. Rather than there being a direct connection between Hebrews and any one of the other text, it appears plausible that the author was in dialogue with other traditions, but commits to no single one, and as a result presents a unique Melchizedek figure with interesting similarities. The exegesis appears the result of a shared exegetical climate within Second Temple Judaism: the texts from Qumran, Philo, *2 Enoch*, and Hebrews all use the figure, yet they do so differently and for different exegetical purposes. This has resulted in quite different

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[379] Fitzmyer, "Further Light", 31.

[380] Best formulated by Attridge, *Hebrews*, 29–30, who states that "there is no single strand of Judaism that provides a clear and simple matrix within which to understand the thought of [Hebrews]". Cf. Combrink, "Some Thoughts", 31; Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, 74; Aschim, "Melchizedek", 129–130; 146–147; Gieschen, "Enoch", 379; and Gianotto, *Melchisedek*, 141–144.

[381] E.g., Horton, *Melchizedek*, 167, Lincoln Douglas Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought* (SNTSMS 65; Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and Schenck, *Hebrews*, 77–78.

figures often sharing only a name. Yet their similarities provide an insight into the environment of Second Temple Judaism, in which such exegetical rewritings were possible.

This leads us to the final question of whether the author inserted any heavenly or supernatural associations into his specific version of the figure of Melchizedek. The text itself contains no explicit mention of any such connotations that would allow us to affirm conclusively that Melchizedek was, in Hebrews, a divine and exalted being, or cast as an eschatological warrior.[382] Indeed, as we have discussed, it was crucial for the author to ensure the appropriation of such roles to Christ, and to denigrate the angels in general in ch. 1. At the same time, in several passages of Hebrews we find a focus on the Melchizedek figure as being without parents and eternal. This is particularly clear in the author's unique additions (7:3). In this way, the Melchizedek figure takes on exalted overtones, and when combined with the hypothesis that our author was aware of existing traditions concerning the celestial High-Priestly aspects of the figure, we can come to the conclusion that the author, to some extent, used elements from the exalted interpretations in his own exegesis. Throughout Hebrews, in an application of synkrisis, Christ is consistently compared to beings of the highest value to the author. As the text betrays no reasons for believing that the author thought any differently of Melchizedek, it follows that the figure was chosen in part because of the exalted traditions associated with it. These traditions allowed the author to exalt Christ even further. What marks Hebrews out as unique in this is that these associations appear not to have been of central importance to the author—the Melchizedek figure is used primarily to facilitate the exaltation of a different figure, that of Christ the High Priest. In this way, the author does not commit entirely to any of the earlier interpretations, but instead freely uses the material and traditions that were circulating at the time, in order to establish the precedence of the priesthood of Christ. This priesthood is only made more important by the exalted Melchizedek traditions, which simultaneously extols Christ.

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[382] This view has been argued by several scholars, including Davila, "King", 221: "For the writer of Hebrews, Melchizedek is a pre-existent and immortal priestly divine being 'like the Son of God'". Note the change in his later work, *Liturgical Works*, 165, "Minimally, it seems that the writer [of Hebrews] is aware of a tradition that made Melchizedek an immortal and pre-existent celestial high priest". Cf., also Moshe Reiss, "The Melchizedek Traditions", *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 26:2 (2012): 259, who makes the surprising claim that "In the Dead Sea Scrolls Melchizedek appears as a celestial high priest and eschatological warrior. This is consistent with the later author of the Letter to the Hebrews. Both he and Jesus himself were undoubtedly aware of these legends".

3.11.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in the Epistle to the Hebrews

In this chapter's analysis of the Melchizedek figure in Hebrews, we found that, in order to create a Melchizedek suited to the author's specific theological purpose, he made use of all the Scriptural material available to him. Through a rewriting of the narrative material from Genesis and a Christological interpretation of Psalm 110, the author established a figure with two primary aspects. The first of these emphasizes the priest-king from Salem's superiority over the patriarch Abraham and the later Levitical priesthood. This was primarily achieved by a subtle shift in the focus of the Genesis *Vorlage*, which made it clear that it was Abraham who gave tithe to Melchizedek, that it was Melchizedek who blessed Abraham, and that it is the priesthood of Melchizedek that is based upon a divine oath, and not the Levitical priesthood. The second aspect of the Melchizedek figure in Hebrews is a product of the author's unique textual additions, which emphasize how Melchizedek was ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ, μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές (7:3), and ἐκεῖ δὲ μαρτυρούμενος ὅτι ζῇ (7:8). In addition to these changes, the author adds that Melchizedek was ἀπάτωρ ἀμήτωρ ἀγενεαλόγητος, μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν μήτε ζωῆς τέλος ἔχων (7:3). The author thus transforms the original figure to present a Melchizedek who transcends the category of human beings. The resulting immortal high priest figure thus shares elements with the exalted traditions.

The answer to why the author of Hebrews (the only text of the New Testament to mention Melchizedek) presents the figure as a semiexalted being is connected to the specific theological necessities that caused him to use the figure in the first place. While the description of Hebrews as merely "the book about Melchizedek"[383] may well highlight the importance of the figure to the author, the primary focus of Hebrews is decidedly on the figure of Christ, and on the attempt to explain the nature of, and precedence for, his priestly status. Through this exposition, begun in the first chapter's treatment of the angels, the author seeks to make sure that his audience know that the aspects commonly attributed to these beings in contemporary traditions were all functions rightly belonging to Christ.

The author then delves into a similar synkrisis with the Melchizedek figure. The figure is exalted as much as is possible without making it a direct competitor to Christ, in order to emphasize the importance of his priesthood and to ensure the further extolling of Christ as the final High

[383] Bruce, *Epistle*, xi.

Priest of this priesthood. Through his exegesis on the Melchizedek figure, the author achieves his aims, including establishing the priestly service of Christ. Yet the primary purpose behind the author's use of the Melchizedek figure is to extol Christ. This is revealed by the way Melchizedek is cast aside as soon as the priestly precedence to Christ has been sufficiently explained: following the focus on the figure throughout ch. 7, Melchizedek suddenly disappears from Hebrews, and is not even mentioned in the lengthy list of ancient role models in ch. 11. Once the author had accomplished his endeavour, he provides no additional information about what happened to the figure after his encounter with Abraham, what the later fate of this eternal being was, or what his function was to be, following the inauguration of Christ as High Priest.

While the appearance and particulars of the Melchizedek figure within Hebrews initially appear enigmatic, the author's unique figure may have been a more logical choice than is normally argued. As discussed earlier, Psalm 110 was one of the psalms most frequently used by New Testament authors, and its contents would thus have been familiar to our author. As Psalm 110 also constitutes the author's primary link between Melchizedek and Christ, this would appear to be the logical point of departure for the author's exegesis. Following the interpretation, shared with other early Christian texts, that Christ is the subject of 110:1, it is but a small step to interpret 110:4 as also referring to Christ. Thus, a link between Melchizedek and Christ may have been established by an author whose exegetical objective, based on the contents of Hebrews, was to explain how Christ's death was an atoning sacrifice. This sacral action requires the author to clarify Christ's status and function as the one true High Priest, and to explain how this could be, considering contemporary Jewish customs regarding this institution. Our author thus attempts to establish a priesthood suitable for Christ. Through a theological rewriting of 110:4 and Gen 14:18–20, the first priest in this way became a model for the last priest—a model which allowed the author to establish a priesthood both divinely sanctioned and established earlier than all others, as a superior alternative to the Levitical priesthood.

In addition to this, the facet that created Hebrews' semiexalted Melchizedek may have originated in the description of εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα from 110:4, combined with the author's awareness of the exegetical changes to the Melchizedek figure performed by other sectarian communities. Although the figure in Hebrews has not become angelomorphized, as it is in 11Q13, and does not serve as the final cultic saviour, like in *2 Enoch*, the author's Melchizedek, presented as the eternal high priest made like the Son of God, shares more elements with these traditions than with the unexalted versions in the *Genesis Apocryphon* and Philo. Due to the lack of any direct literary dependencies, these shared attributes cannot be proven to

result from textual contact. Instead, the similarities seem to be the result of a shared exegetical climate in which such rewritings were possible, a shared wealth of traditions influencing the Melchizedek figures, and a shared exegetical objective. This objective appears primarily to have been the need of a sectarian community early in its history to present a credible priesthood that was superior to the Levitical priesthood.

The author of Hebrews, based on the exegetical content of his text and the similarities in the use of the Melchizedek figure to establish such a priesthood, can thus be situated within this tradition. The author of Hebrews shared an exegetical objective with other sectarian authors and, as they had done, he found his solution in the first priest mentioned in Hebrew Scripture. This provided an alternative to the *Anstalt*, and one which granted the necessary antiquity to create a superior priesthood. However, the author of Hebrews went through these exegetical manoeuvres primarily in order to establish a priesthood suitable for his Christ.

3.12 Flavius Josephus

3.12.1 Introduction to Flavius Josephus

Of the large number of texts written by the Jewish priest, politician, and general (Titus) Flavius Josephus (ca. 37 C.E.–100), only two major treatises have survived the ravages of time: the *Bellum judaicum* and the *Antiquitates judaicae*. Interestingly, we find the figure of Melchizedek mentioned in both. These works have been described as sharing the apologetic purpose of Josephus' account of Jewish history and culture to his primarily Greco-Roman readers,[384] in particular of events regarding the

[384] The addressees have been variously identified as "the Roman government", "the Greco-Roman world", and "the Greek world at large", to name but a few suggestions; cf. Steve Mason, "Introduction to the Judean Antiquities", in *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary, vol. 3: Judean Antiquities 1–4* (ed. Steve Mason; Leiden: Brill, 2000), xiii. Mason suggests that Josephus wrote to an audience of "interested outsiders" who were "deeply interested in Judean culture", ibid., xix–xx, citing contemporary authors as evidence that "attraction to Judaism was a wellknown phenomenon at that time"; The parallels between Josephus' *Antiquitates* and the *Roman Antiquities*, written by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in ca. 7 B.C.E., support the suggestion (cf. Henry St. John Thackeray, *Josephus: Jewish Antiquities, Books I–III* [LCL 242; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001], ix–x) that Josephus may have wished to write a Jewish counterpart to this text.

Jewish-Roman war (in *Bellum*) and early Jewish history (in *Antiquitates*).[385]

As we will see, Josephus' two uses of the Melchizedek figure support the idea that his primary reason for writing was to establish the antiquity of Judean culture, in order to cater to the antiquarian taste of his Greco-Roman audience. In effect, Josephus sought to prove that Judean culture could be traced in an unbroken line from Creation to his own time.[386] This focus may have been part of an effort to remove some of the antipathy towards Judeans at the time, appealing to the intelligentsia through their respect for all things old. Thus, Josephus' writings primarily served to lessen hostile Roman sentiments towards Judeans by redirecting the focus away from the recent unsuccessful revolt (*Bellum*), and to create an image of an ancient culture worth of respect (*Antiquitates*).[387]

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[385] *A.J.* 1.1–5; *C. Ap.* 1.53–56; cf. Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees: A Composition-Critical Study* (StPB 39; Leiden: Brill, 1991), 192–193, and Sterling, *Historiography*, 310. While his works have commonly been characterized as being apologetic on the Judean origins and his own military career, *Bellum* and *Antiquitates* have neither the expected tone of defensive apologetics, nor the length or moralizing content, that would be expected had this been the main purpose of the texts; cf. Mason, "Introduction", xxxiv. Josephus may have written his texts to offer a defence of his own actions during and after the Roman-Jewish war, but this appears secondary to his primary purposes. In addition, according to ibid., xv, any attempts to read *Antiquitates* as primarily an apologetic answer to critiques of Josephus' surrender are "poorly grounded"; Sterling, *Historiography*, 17; 297–308, has suggested that *Antiquitates* was an example of what he termed "apologetic historiography"—responses to Greek ethnography written by priestly members of the multiple ethnic subgroups within the Hellenistic world, in order to "establish the identity of the group within the setting of the larger world". Josephus' writings do appear to correspond well with the idea of apologetic historiography, that is, a positive introduction to Judean culture aimed primarily at Greeks and Romans within the Hellenistic world.

[386] According to Mason, "Introduction", xxiii, an example of this is how Josephus is at pains to stress that Abraham taught the Egyptians. This focus may have been necessary to disprove the common belief at the time (cf. Tacitus, *Historiae* 5.1–13) that the Judeans were Egyptians who had fled Egypt in disgrace. In addition, Mason, ibid., points out that Josephus entitled his work *Judean Ancient Lore*, while *Contra Apionem* was originally known as *On the Antiquity of the Judeans*.

[387] Ibid., xxiv.

3.12.2 *Bellum Judaicum*

3.12.2.1 Introduction to *Bellum Judaicum*

In the introduction to *Bellum*, Josephus states (1.3,6) that the text is a Greek version of the original, now lost, Hebrew or Aramaic version, finished between 75 and 79 C.E.[388] Josephus claims that he wrote it because he, as a priest and general, knew both the people and the Jewish-Roman war intimately, and because previous accounts of the important wars had lacked historical accuracy (1.2). According to Laqueur and Thackeray, *Bellum* was written as a propagandistic text commissioned by Vespasian and Titus with the aim of deterring its readers from rebelling against the Roman Empire.[389] Yet as Mason has shown, *Bellum* constitutes a text produced by an author proud of his Jewish heritage, intent on presenting the recent war as not the fault of the Jewish people, and of demonstrating Jewish culture as comparable to the Greco-Roman culture. A primary purpose behind *Bellum* was to correct contemporary opinions of the Jewish nation and not (only) to function as a mouthpiece of Rome, producing instead a text that aimed "to refute anti-Judean and chauvinistic Roman accounts in circulation".[390]

3.12.2.2 Melchizedek in *Bellum Judaicum*

Josephus' first use of the figure of Melchizedek occurs in his description of earlier examples of military conquest and subjugation of Jerusalem. Although not directly mentioned by name, it is clear from the description that it is the priest-king Melchizedek to whom Josephus refers in *B.J.* 6.438. Josephus retells the story of Jerusalem, and mentions that the king of Babylon subdued it *fourteen hundred and sixty-eight years and six months* after it was founded.[391] In order to prove the antiquity of the Jewish capital,

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[388] The *terminus ad quem* is based on Josephus' notes in *Vita* 359 and 361, which indicate that he presented a copy to Vespasian, who died in 79. The *terminus a quo* rests upon Josephus mentioning the dedication of the Temple of Peace in 75 (*B.J.* 7.158); cf. Mason, *Flavius Josephus*, 55–62; 67–69.

[389] Both quoted in Mason, "Introduction", xiv.

[390] Ibid., xviii.

[391] Assuming that Josephus is referring to Nebuchadnezzar's actions in 587 B.C.E. (2 Kgs 25), he dates the foundation to ca. 2055 B.C.E. Greek text and English translation

Josephus refers to the Melchizedek figure: *Its original founder was a Canaanite chief, called in the native tongue "Righteous King"; for such indeed he was. In virtue thereof he was the first to officiate as priest of God and, being the first to build the temple, gave the city, previously called Solyma, the name of Jerusalem.* A similar endeavour, reached through other means, is found in *B.J.* 7.376, where God is designated as Jerusalem's original founder (οἰκιστὴν), and Josephus describes the city as the *mother-city of the whole Jewish race*.[392]

Melchizedek's name, although not directly mentioned, is interpreted in *B.J.* 6.438 as meaning *in the native tongue* a *Righteous King*. This title had been given Melchizedek, according to Josephus, because of his virtuous example. The figure is described as having been *a Canaanite chief* (Χαναναίων δυνάστης). The unusual term δυνάστης elsewhere (1.112; 2.67) designates "ethnarchs, tetrarchs, and other quasi-royal officials", rather than primarily "kings".[393]

Melchizedek is confirmed as the first priest to officiate in Jerusalem, and διὰ τοῦτο the first to serve God within the temple. In Josephus' version, the priesthood was given to Melchizedek because of his righteousness. As such, Josephus depicts Melchizedek as a Canaanite priest who became the first to serve the God of Israel, based on a combination of Melchizedek as a righteous chief, the concept that he founded Jerusalem and its temple, and that he was the first priest mentioned in Hebrew Scripture.[394]

A unique addition to the characteristics of the figure is Josephus' report that it was none other than Melchizedek who had the first temple built—a tradition contrary to Scripture, in which Solomon is said to have been the founder of the temple (1 Kgs 6–8). According to Josephus, this temple would have functioned for just six months before the Babylonians destroyed it, and the reference to this in *B.J.* 6.437 provides further reasons for the connection between Melchizedek and the temple, thus removing any likelihood of it being a mistake.[395]

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from Henry St. John Thackeray, *Josephus: The Jewish War, Books V–VII* (LCL 210; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1928).

[392] Christopher T. Begg, *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary, volume 4*: *Judean Antiquities 5–7* (ed. Steve Mason; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 218.

[393] In 1.365, δυνάστης is used of both king Herod and the Roman general Mark Antony, cf. ibid., 46–47.

[394] Mason, *"Priest Forever"*, 155.

[395] Ibid.

It is noteworthy that Josephus, with his priestly background,[396] would provide this unique and surprising tradition on the origin of the temple in Jerusalem. Josephus apparently saw no problem in having a Canaanite figure as founder of both Jerusalem and its temple, even though, according to Josephus' own chronology, David would soon expel all Canaanites from the city (6.439). Had Josephus chosen to withhold the information that Melchizedek was a Canaanite, as Philo did, the narrative would have presented a much stronger argument for the antiquity of the Jewish claims to Jerusalem. The most plausible explanation of this claim is a combination of the need for the first priest in Jerusalem to have served at a temple and Josephus' attempt to please his Greco-Roman audiences' antiquarian tastes by further increasing the age of the temple, at the expense of providing an account in accordance with tradition and Scripture.

3.12.3 *Antiquitates Judaicae*

3.12.3.1 Introduction to *Antiquitates Judaicae*

Josephus'*Antiquitates judaicae* was published in two editions (ca. 93/94 and ca. 100 C.E.).[397] As the second part was published after the death of Josephus' Roman patron, it may represent Josephus' further efforts to distance himself from "his connexion with Roman political propaganda".[398] Its twenty volumes consist of two main parts, with the first volumes (to 11.303) discussing history from the time of Adam to the time of the first temple, while the second part describes the time of the second temple.

[396] Josephus often mentions his priestly descent (e.g., *B.J.* 1.3; 3.352; *C. Ap.* 1.54); cf. Steve Mason, "Series Preface", in *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary. Volume 3: Judean Antiquities 1–4* (ed. Steve Mason; Leiden: Brill, 2000), ix, and Sterling, *Historiography*, 229n.13.

[397] A date suggested by Thackeray, *LCL 242*, vii, x–xi, primarily because of a supposed allusion to the death of Agrippa in *Vita* 359, which, according to Photius, transpired in 100 C.E., cf., Mason, "Introduction", xvii.

[398] Thackeray, *LCL 242*, vii; According to Mason, "Introduction", xv–xvii, others have suggested that the change was due to Josephus' support of the rabbinic movement developing at Yavneh. Mason argues that this is unlikely, mainly because Josephus seems to be critical of the movement in *Antiquitates*.

3.12.3.2 Melchizedek in *Antiquitates Judaicae*

Josephus' second reference to the figure of Melchizedek occurs when he describes the life and importance of the patriarch Abraham. As we enter the story, Abraham has, with his army of 318 servants and three friends, defeated his Assyrian enemies and driven them into Oba, the land of the Damascenes.[399] Following this (1.179), *Habramos, having rescued those of the Sodomites who were prisoners (including his kinsman Lotos), who had previously been captured by the Assyrians, returned in peace.*[400] As Abraham returns, he is greeted by the king of Sodom at a place called the royal plain—a location elsewhere described by Josephus (*A.J.* 7.243) as being two stades outside of Jerusalem.

As in the Genesis *Vorlage*, this meeting is abruptly interrupted by the Melchizedek passage: *There the king of Solyma* (Σολυμα)*, Melchizedek, received him. And this signifies "righteous king". And he was such indisputable, since for this reason he was also made priest of God. As to Solyma, he called it Hierosolyma.*[401] *And this Melchizedek granted hospitality to Habramos' army and furnished a great abundance of their needs, and in the feast he began both to praise him and to bless God who had subjugated the enemy to him. And when Habramos gave him the tithe of the spoil, he accepted the gift* (*A.J.* 1.180–181).

The initial meeting between Abraham and Melchizedek, occurring on the *royal plain*, resolves some of the problems of the Gen 14 account. The identity of Solyma with Jerusalem is made clear by Josephus. The use of Σολυμα, rather than LXX's Σαλήμ, may derive from the *Solymi* mentioned by Homer (*Iliad* 6.184; *Odyssey* 5.283), a people who were later reported by Tacitus to have founded the city of Hierosolyma (*Historiae* 5.2.3). This would be in accord with Josephus' focus on making Jewish culture as ancient as possible and tying it into a common frame of reference for his Hellenistic audience.[402]

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[399] A section characterized by Thomas W. Franxman, *Genesis and the "Jewish Antiquities" of Flavius Josephus* (BibOr 35; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 135, as "dreary moralization".

[400] Greek text from Henry St. John Thackeray, *Josephus: Jewish Antiquities, Books I–III* (LCL 242; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1930). Translations, unless otherwised noted, from Louis H. Feldman, *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary. Volume 3: Judean Antiquities 1–4* (ed. Steve Mason; Leiden: Brill, 2000).

[401] For this translation, see the discussion below.

[402] Cf. Feldman, *Antiquities*, 68.

The name of the location Solyma is later changed to Hierosolyma,[403] without explanation at this point (however, in *A.J.* 7.67, Josephus explains this name as a combination of ἱερόν (*temple*) with Solyma).[404] Josephus once more (cf. *B.J.* 6.438) states that it was Melchizedek who gave Jerusalem its name. This reading is based on the MSS R (Codex Parisinus Gr. 1421), O (Oxoniensis Bodleianus 186), and P (Codex Parisinus Gr. 1419), which all read *As to Solyma, he called it Hierosolyma*. Thackeray and Feldman both refrain from this reading and follow the other manuscripts (presumably S (Codex Vindobenensis Historicus Graecus 20), M (Codex Marcianus 381), and L (Laurentianus 69.20)).[405] Feldman prefers *As to Solyma, they later called it Hierosolyma*, although he does not mention why he chooses the particular reading, while Thackeray has *Solyma was in fact later the place afterwards called Hierosolyma*, a reading based on the text produced by Niese.[406] Yet this constitutes an eclectic reading, as Thackeray himself states that the MSS R, O, and M are the "superior" manuscripts, while S and P are "seldom trustworthy" when unsupported.[407] Thackeray's decision is thus interesting, and instead we will here follow MSS R, O, and M, and read *he called it*. This reading gains further support from the parallel passage in *B.J.* 6.438, from the concept of *lectio difficilior* and, in addition, from the fact that it would seem a more probable later editorial change to remove the name of Melchizedek and insert the more neutral, and more traditionally acceptable, *they*.

Josephus again provides a translation of Melchizedek's name as meaning *righteous king* (βασιλεὺς δίκαιος), and mentions how this was an *indisputable* fact—perhaps in order to emphasize his characteristics in opposition to the king of Sodom. We also learn that it was because of this quality that Melchizedek was *made a priest of God* (ἱερέα γενέσθαι τοῦ θεοῦ), although Josephus does not characterize Melchizedek as a High Priest, nor is God designated as the Most High.

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[403] In *A.J.* 7.67, Josephus provides a paragraph on the changing names of Jerusalem. Noteworthy is that he here makes no mention of Melchizedek's role in giving the city its name: *It was David then who first expelled the Jebusites from Hierosolyma and named the city after himself. For in the time of our ancestor Abram it was called 'Solyma' [some, however say that Homer afterwards called it 'Hierosolyma']. The Temple however, they named 'Solyma', which in the Hebrew language means 'security'.* The comment on Homer's involvement should probably be regarded as a gloss, cf. Begg, *Antiquities*, 222, perhaps inspired by *Odyssey* 5.283, where the "Solymian hills" are mentioned. The same location is mentioned by Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.173, as referring to *us* because the *Solymian hills are in our country*.

[404] Feldman, *Antiquities*, 68.

[405] Ibid., xxxviii, 68, who characterizes the remaining manuscripts as of limited value.

[406] Thackeray, *LCL 242*, 89.

[407] Ibid., xvii.

This king-priest then entertains Abraham and his entire army, provides them with hospitality, sees to all their needs, and gives them a feast, in what appears to be a midrash on the original offering of bread and wine from Gen 14. During this feast, Melchizedek blesses Abraham, and then blesses God for Abraham's miraculous victory. Josephus thus follows Genesis in the order of blessings, and apparently was aware of no problems associated with this sequence. We will see shortly that this sequence was condemned by later Jewish texts.

In the final part of the meeting, Josephus also resolves the troublesome issue of who tithes who. In Josephus' account of the events, it is clearly Abraham who gives Melchizedek the tithe of the spoils, in exchange for Melchizedek's blessing and his interpretation of the victory as caused by divine intervention.

3.12.4 Conclusions to Melchizedek in the Writings of Josephus

In analysing Josephus' two references to the Melchizedek figure, we found that although each differed in details from the other, both served the same purpose of proving the antiquity of Judaism. In *Bellum*, Josephus rewrote Gen 14:18–20 (with no discernible influences from Psalm 110), emphasizing throughout the importance of the Melchizedek figure for the history of Jerusalem. Although Melchizedek was a Canaanite chieftain—a detail Josephus does not conceal—this local priest-king is made into Jerusalem's original founder. Additionally, he was the one who renamed the city *Ierosolyma*, following the completion of the temple for which he was responsible.

In *Antiquitates*, Josephus again rewrites the Genesis episode to prove the antiquity of the Jerusalem priesthood, and he removes a range of the textual problems from the *Vorlage*, including the location in which Melchizedek receives Abraham (near Jerusalem on the royal plain; cf. *GenApo* 22:14) and the question of the purpose of the gifts of bread and wine, which are here changed into nourishment for Abraham's army (similar to *GenApo* 22:15 and Philo *Abr.* 235). Josephus also inserts additional elements, including an etymological explanation of Melchizedek's name (shared with Philo *Leg.* 79 and Heb 7:2), which he uses to explaining why Melchizedek was the first priest in Scripture. Although Melchizedek is not directly termed a High Priest, the focus of the text is on Melchizedek's role as a priest to the Jewish god at the temple of Jerusalem, and following our reading of 1.180 (*As to Solyma, he called it Hierosolyma*), Josephus again

stretches the *Vorlage* to associate the first priest mentioned in Hebrew Scripture with the Jewish capital.

In both *Bellum* and *Antiquitates*, it is difficult to imagine a more important figure for the early beginnings of the later Jewish capital than Melchizedek. The most plausible answer as to why Josephus went to such exegetical extremes in providing an alternative aetiology, is that the primary purpose of this Jewish historian was to amplify Jewish history in the eyes of his Greco-Roman recipients. He did so by predating the origin of the city, temple, and theocracy. This purpose necessitated his rather loose approach to the foundations of Judaism. Josephus' use of the figure of Melchizedek is a sterling example of this, and it also provides additional plausibility to the claim that the texts were intended to please a primarily Greco-Roman audience. Only those with a cursory knowledge of Jewish history and traditions would have accepted Josephus' rewriting of history far beyond what the traditional Scriptural sources could support.[408]

[408] The outstanding issue concerning why Josephus would have chosen to maintain the Canaanite nature of Melchizedek may also support the notion that his addressees were Greco-Romans, who did not differentiate between these nationalities.

CHAPTER 4. NEUTRAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MELCHIZEDEK FIGURE

In the preceding two chapters, our investigations into the ancient texts identified and analysed two distinct interpretational strategies, along with indications of a third, of using the Melchizedek figure. The following three chapters will be devoted to an examination of further illustrative examples from each interpretative category. In order to do this, we will depart from the hitherto chosen approach, and instead we will discuss examples chronologically within each category. The chosen examples represent the dominant developments in each category during the second to fourth centuries. This analysis will allow us to illustrate how the figure, far from becoming insignificant, remained fiercely discussed during these years.

The first category of interpretation to be examined in Chapter 4 consists of the texts in which the figure is used primarily to expound a theological question, or to extol a different figure. We encountered this approach in Genesis and Psalm 110, and it was repeated in several of the later examples: the *Greek Fragment on the Life of Abraham* and *Genesis Apocryphon*. In these texts, written predominantly by early Christian authors, we will find little or no evidence of the religious debate that is apparent from the remaining two categories of interpretation.

The second interpretative category represents the polemical use of the figure, of which we have so far only found possible indications of in the damaged text of *Jubilees*. However, in the period we are now entering, this polemical approach appears in several texts, mostly of Jewish authors. As examined in Chapter 5, these passages were aimed at the Melchizedek figure and neutralizing any attempt at creating priesthoods based upon it—as was done in 11Q13, *2 Enoch*, and Hebrews. Chapter 6 investigates the final category of interpretation and finds evidence of a continued and strong exegetical tradition in which Melchizedek was exalted. This will include Gnostic examples and the evidence to be gleaned from the heresiologies of the Church fathers.

4.1 Justin Martyr

4.1.1 Introduction to Justin Martyr

Justin, born ca. 100 C.E. in the Roman colony of Flavia Neapolis, Samaria, converted to Christianity and was martyred during the reign of Marcus Aurelius in ca. 165.[409] From his writings, the majority of which have been lost, the most influential are his two *Apologies* and his *Dialogus cum Tryphone* (or *Dialogus*). In Justin, we also find the first mention of the figure of Melchizedek by a Christian author since Hebrews.

The *Dialogus* was written towards the end of Justin's life (ca. 160 C.E.),[410] and exhibits a strong missionary aim of seeking to persuade Jews to convert, and to strengthen the spirit of those who had already done so (e.g. 28.2; 142.2–3).[411] The fictional setting of the *Dialogus*, at the end of the Bar Kochba War, allows Justin to narrate how he, clad in philosopher's garb, was accosted by a stranger. A man who *told me frankly both his name and his family: "Trypho", he said, "I am called and I am a Hebrew of the circumcision, and having escaped the war lately carried on there, I am spending my days in Greece and chiefly at Corinth"* (*Dial.* 1).[412] Justin uses this, presumably invented, Jewish war refugee to represent all Jews. Trypho entreats Justin to *tell us your opinion of these matters, and what idea you entertain respecting God, and what your philosophy is*. Justin's lengthy

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[409] Cf. Theodore Stylianopoulos, "Justin Martyr", in *EEC* (ed. Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris; New York: Garland, 1998), 647-650 and David Rokéah, *Justin Martyr and the Jews* (Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series 5; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 1.

[410] The date depends on a reference to Justin's first *Apology*. This text is traditionally dated to ca. 155 C.E., due to its mention of the procurator Felix, who served between 151 and 154; cf. ibid., 2, and Stylianopoulos, "Theophilus", who suggests that *Dialogus* was written in Rome.

[411] Cf. Rokéah, *Justin*, 1; 8–11, and David Brakke, *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010), 86. Some scholars, e.g., Michael Mach, "Justin Martyr's Dialogus Cum Tryphone Iudaeo and the Development of Christian Anti-Judaism", in *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews* (ed. O. Limor and G. G. Stroumsa; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 27–47, have argued that Justin's work was primarily aimed at Gentiles, and thus contains no missionary intentions towards Jews.

[412] Greek text from Miroslav Marcovich, *Iustini Martyris: Dialogus cum Tryphone* (PTS 47. Berlin - New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997). Translation from Arthur C. Coxe, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenæus* (*ANF* 1; ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995).

answer makes up the rest of the *Dialogus*: an exposé of the correct understanding of Scripture, which Justin believed he had been given as a gift from God (*Dial.* 55.3; 64.2–3).

4.1.2 Melchizedek in *Dialogus cum Tryphone*

Justin uses the figure of Melchizedek multiple times. The first occurrence is in ch. 21, in a discussion of circumcision. Justin attempts to demonstrate that, as circumcision was unknown before the time of Abraham, Scripture contains references to a multitude of uncircumcised figures who were nonetheless found righteous by God. The figures listed by Justin include Adam, Abel, and Enoch. Justin then (ch. 19) states that *Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High, was uncircumcised* (Ἀπερίμητος ἦν)*; to whom also Abraham, the first who received circumcision after the flesh, gave tithes and he blessed him*. Justin here focuses on the uncircumcised status of Melchizedek, making reference to Gen 14 and emphasizing Abraham's deference to Melchizedek. Justin continues his exposé on Melchizedek with material from Ps 110:4: *after whose order God declared, by the mouth of David, that He would establish the everlasting Priest*. Following Hebrews, Justin interprets this as revealing Melchizedek as the model of Christ's future priesthood.

Later, in ch. 32, Justin returns to Melchizedek during a more detailed discussion of Psalm 110. Justin cites the text much as we know it: *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent: Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek*. He then (ch. 33) further debates the correct interpretation of this verse. The occasion for this discussion is that Trypho has been used to convey the interpretation that 110:4 refers to King Hezekiah (Isa 36–39; 2 Kgs 18–20).[413] Justin replies: *You are mistaken, I shall prove to you from these very words forthwith. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent", it is said; and "Thou are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek", with what follows and precedes. Not even you will venture to object that Hezekiah was either a priest or is the everlasting priest of God*.

Trypho proven wrong, Justin again gives his interpretation of the Psalm: *That this is spoken of our Jesus, these expressions show. But your ears are shut up, and your hearts are made dull. For by this statement, "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent: Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek", with an oath God has shown Him (on account of your*

[413] According to Martin McNamara, "Melchizedek", 19, this tradition does not appear in any extant Jewish sources.

unbelief) to be the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek; i.e., as Melchizedek was described by Moses as the priest of the Most High, and he was a priest of those who were in uncircumcision, and blessed the circumcised Abraham who brought him tithes, so God has shown that His everlasting Priest, called also by the Holy Spirit Lord, would be Priest of those in uncircumcision. In ch. 33, Justin is focused on the priestly aspects of the Melchizedek figure from Genesis. He indicates that Melchizedek was God's chosen priest to the uncircumcised, yet refrains from mentioning any of Melchizedek's other attributes and actions from Genesis (his position as king of Salem, his offering of wine and bread, and so on). Only those elements that enhance the figure's position as priest are retained, all to convey how Melchizedek serves as the model of Christ's priesthood to the uncircumcised.

Justin later briefly returns to these subjects: in ch. 63, he confirms that the correct interpretation of Ps 110:4 is as a description of Christ: *Does this not declare to you* [Trypho] *that* [Christ was] *from of Old, and that the God and Father of all things intended Him to be begotten by a human womb?* Justin then, in ch. 82, repeats his interpretation and restates his understanding of Hezekiah as the subject of Ps 110:4: *Who does not admit, then, that Hezekiah is no priest forever after the order of Melchizedek?*[414]

4.1.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in *Dialogus cum Tryphone*

In *Dialogus*, Justin employs the Melchizedek figure several times with the primary aim of proving two points: that the Melchizedek mentioned in Genesis was God's chosen priest, despite being uncircumcised; and that the correct interpretation of Ps 110:4 is that the priesthood of Christ continues Melchizedek's, and thus that circumcision should be shunned by all Christians.

Justin's first point challenges the interpretation of Ps 110:4 as a reference to Hezekiah. This interpretation, otherwise unknown, is something to which Justin returns in order to disprove several times (63; 82; 118). The interpretation of Hezekiah as the subject of 110:4 may have been common during Justin's time, considering the number of times he mentions it, and the emphasis he puts on disproving it. According to Justin, such an interpretation is impossible, because Hezekiah was not mentioned as a

[414] Later in *Dialogus*, Justin twice returns to the figure to recapitulate points already discussed; in ch. 113: *This is he who is the king of Salem after the Order of Melchizedek, and the eternal Priest of the Most High*, and in ch. 118: *And I have explained that the Lord swore, "after the order of Melchizedek", and what this prediction means*.

priest, and thus could not have been God's everlasting priest. Rather, this verse refers to Christ, and following the interpretational strategy initially found in Hebrews, Justin finds the subject of 110:4 to be Christ, who was *dishonourable and inglorious, so much so that the last curse contained in the law of God fell on him, for he was crucified* (ch. 32). Christ became High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, in an interpretation very similar to that of Hebrews. Justin uses the passage to demonstrate that, similar to the argument in Hebrews, Christ was the one spoken of in Psalm 110, and that this priesthood was to the uncircumcised.

Justin continues this line of interpretation by stating that Melchizedek was the priest of the Most High to the uncircumcised, and that he blessed the circumcised Abraham. The argument is, however, somewhat flawed, as Abraham (according to Gen 17:24) was not circumcised until later.[415] This is a mistake repeated by several later authors (for example, Tertullian), revealing their dependence on Justin's exegesis. This leads to Justin's second argument involving Melchizedek: it has been shown that Melchizedek is considered righteous, even though he did not observe the (later) commandments. To Justin, this primarily meant that Melchizedek was uncircumcised. Justin's opinion on circumcision is that having a foreskin is superior to being circumcised (e.g. *Dial.* 19:4), and indeed that circumcision is a "curse that singled out the Jews for punishment".[416] Justin emphasizes that the first figure in Scripture to submit to circumcision, Abraham, offers tithes to Melchizedek, and thus acknowledges the uncircumcised priesthood of Melchizedek.

Justin's two uses of the figure are thus connected. Abraham acknowledged that God had chosen the uncircumcised Melchizedek as his priest, and the correct interpretation of Psalm 110 reveals that Christ was to become the future priest of this priesthood. This serves to demonstrate that the uncircumcised priesthood of Melchizedek was a model of Christ's future priesthood. This dismissal of the circumcised and the extolling of the priesthood and its future priest, Christ, serve to demonstrate for Justin that the obligation to undergo circumcision does not apply to Christians. Justin's two references to the Melchizedek figure are thus both examples of the neutral category of interpretation.

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[415] A similar anti-Jewish use of the Melchizedek figure is also found in later Syriac texts. In these, Melchizedek is used as evidence of Christ having abolished the need for circumcision (e.g., Aphrahat, *Demonstrationes* 11.3*; Discourse on Priesthood*; and Jacob of Sarug's *Homilies against the Jews* 2.19–36; cf. Adam H. Becker, "The Discourse on Priesthood (BL ADD 18295, FF. 137b–140B): An Anti-Jewish Text on the Abrogation of the Israelite Priesthood", *JSS* 51:1 [2006]: 93.

[416] Rokéah, *Justin*, 81.

4.2 Theophilus of Antioch

4.2.1 Introduction to Theophilus of Antioch

Little is known about Theophilus (?–181/188), except that he converted to Christianity as an adult and went on to become the bishop of Antioch. His writings have all but been lost to history, and only the three books of his *Ad Autolycum* have survived.[417]

An early Christian apologist, he discusses topics similar to those of Justin Martyr and later apologists. Theophilus' allegorical interpretation of Genesis served primarily to counter paganism (in particular, idolatry and emperor-worship), presenting instead what he regarded as examples of superior Christian morality.[418]

4.2.2 Melchizedek in *Ad Autolycum*

The detailed chronology of the world presented by Theophilus in the second book of *Ad Autolycum* describes the events that transpired after the Flood. Here the author informs his readers that: *And at that time there was a righteous king called Melchisedek, in the city of Salem, now called Jerusalem* (2.31).[419] Theophilus here follows the Genesis *Vorlage* closely. The minor rewritings consist of a precise identification of Salem as Jerusalem and the additional description of Melchizedek as a "righteous" king. This title is reminiscent of the etymological interpretation of the name found in Philo, Hebrews, and Josephus—although we here find the title without any indication of its origin in the name. This could indicate that

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[417] Cf. Philip Schaff and Arthur C. Coxe, *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermes, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria* (*ANF* 2; New York: Christian Literature Publishing, 1983), 134; Robert M. Grant, *Theophilus of Antioch: Ad Autolycum* (OECT; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), ix–x, Frederic W. Norris, "Theophilus of Antioch", in *EEC* (ed. Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris; New York: Garland, 1998), 1122, and Rick Rogers, *Theophilus of Antioch: The Life and Thought of a Second-Century Bishop* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2000), 3–9.

[418] Cf. Grant, *Theophilus*, xv–xvii, and Norris, "Theophilus", 1122.

[419] Greek text from Johann K. T. von Otto, ed., *Theophili. Ad Autolycum, vol. 3* (Corpus apologetarum christianorum saeculi secundi 7; Jena: F. Mauke, 1861). English translation from Grant, *Theophilus*.

Theophilus was unaware of the Hebrew connotations of the name, or that both he and his recipients were familiar with the tradition of interpreting the name as referring to righteousness.

Theophilus continues, stating that Melchizedek *was the first priest of all the priests of God Most High* (οὗτος ἱερεὺς ἐγένετο πρῶτος πάντων ἱερων τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίσου). He interprets the silence in Genesis regarding earlier priests as allowing the statement that Melchizedek was the first to serve God in such a manner, and also that all later priests serving *God Most High* originate from Melchizedek. Theophilus expands this with the claim that *from his time priests are found in existence over the whole earth*.

Theophilus then adds a final note: *From him the city was called Hierousalem* (Ἀπὸ τούτου ἡ πόλις ὠνομάσθη Ἱερουσαλήμ)*, the previously mentioned Jerusalem)*. The idea that Melchizedek was responsible for giving Jerusalem its name is a tradition that we have so far only encountered in the writings of Josephus. After these brief notes, Theophilus goes on to list the kings who reigned after Melchizedek (*And after him reigned Abimelech in Gerar; and after him another Abimelech*), and does not mention Melchizedek again.

4.2.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in *Ad Autolycum*

In this very brief reference to Melchizedek, Theophilus primarily follows the material describing the priest-king from Genesis, and other influences from either Psalm 110 or Hebrews are not discernible. The few additions made by Theophilus all serve to enhance the importance of the figure: Melchizedek is described as a righteous king, the first priest in Jerusalem, and the first to serve God. In addition, it is from Melchizedek that all later priests originate.

These are elements that Theophilus could have arrived at through an exegesis of the Genesis story, but this is not as likely in the case of the most surprising addition to the text: the claim that Melchizedek was the one who named the Jewish capital, a tradition we have so far encountered only in Josephus. While most scholars agree that Theophilus knew Josephus' *Contra Apionem*,[420] the parallel indicates that Theophilus was familiar with more of Josephus' writings than is normally assumed, and that he knew at least *Bellum* or *Antiquitates*.

[420] Cf., e.g., ibid., xii.

Although Theophilus elsewhere embraced the concept of Divine Agents—writing long passages on the agency of *Sophia*, *Pneuma*, and *Logos*[421]—there are no indications in *Ad Autolycum* that Theophilus regarded Melchizedek as an exalted being. Nor does Theophilus follow Hebrews' interpretation in positioning Melchizedek as a model of Christ. Instead, Theophilus, like Justin before him, primarily uses the Melchizedek figure to convey a theological point, and thus presents an example of the neutral interpretative category. In this case, Theophilus subtly rewrote the Genesis passage in his history of the world, in order to be able to present a precise beginning of Jerusalem, of its temple, and of God's priesthood.

4.3 Tertullian

4.3.1 Introduction to Tertullian

Tertullian was born in Carthage in ca. 160, and converted to Christianity between 190 and 195.[422] He produced the first Christian writings in Latin, of which 31 texts have survived to the present. In two of these texts—*Adversus Judaeos* and *Adversus Marcionem*—Tertullian refers to the figure of Melchizedek.

4.3.2 Melchizedek in *Adversus Judaeos*

One of the subjects discussed by Tertullian in his *Adversus Judaeos* (from ca. 195–200) is the question of when God gave the Law to humanity (2.2–6).[423] According to Tertullian, the Law was initially given to Adam and Eve.

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[421] Cf. Rogers, *Theophilus*, 105–112. Rogers (ibid., 111) summarizes Theophilus' view on these beings as the "tools of personification employed to explain the mystery of God's presence and work in the world".

[422] Cf. Robert D. Sider, "Tertullian", in *EEC* (ed. Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris; New York: Garland, 1998), 1107, and Regina Hauses, *Adversus Iudaeos: Gegen die Juden* (Fontes Christiani 75; Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 19–23.

[423] Cf. Sider, "Tertullian", 1107; Hauses, *Gegen die Juden*, 42–43; and Geoffrey D. Dunn, *Tertullian's Aduersus Iudaeos: A Rhetorical Analysis* (Patristic Monograph Series 19; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 177–178.

This is an "embryonic" form of the Law later received by Moses. To Tertullian, Adam and Eve represent typological figures of all humanity, and thus all people are supposed to obey this Law. Tertullian bases this interpretation on a lengthy list of figures from Scripture who had kept God's law, even though they lived prior to Moses' reception of the Law. To Tertullian, the original law was superior to the later Law of Moses, and Tertullian argues that this latter was only meant to be temporary (2.6–9).[424]

In the case of Melchizedek, Tertullian first shows how the figure is among the list of those favoured by God: *Warum wurde Melchizedek als Priester des höchsten Gottes bezeichnet* (sacerdos dei summi nuncupatus)*, wenn es nicht vor dem Priestertum des levitischen Gesetzes Priester gab, die Gott Opfergaben darbrachten?* (si non ante Leviticae legis sacerdotium Levitae fuerunt qui sacrificia deo offerebant?) (2.7).[425] Tertullian emphasizes that Melchizedek (as is the case with Adam, Noah, and Enoch) was honoured by God, even though he was uncircumcised and did not observe the Sabbath: *Auch Melchizedek wurde als Priester des höchsten Gottes, unbeschnitten* (incircumcisi) *und den Sabbat nicht haltend, zum Priestertum Gottes erwählt* (ad sacerdotium dei adlectus est) (2.14).[426]

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[424] Cf. Dunn, *Aduersus Iudaeos*, 112–113.

[425] Latin text and German translation from Hauses, *Gegen die Juden*.

[426] A parallel to this occurs in the later *Constitutiones apostolorum*. This pseudepigraphical text, which itself warns against pseudepigraphical works, reached its final compilation sometime during the late 4th century in Syria; cf. George D. Dragas, "Apostolic Constitutions", in *EEC* (ed. Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris; New York: Garland, 1998), 92. The text is believed to be the work of a Christian with anti-Judean views (i.e., 2.61.1, where the term "Christ-killers" is used to describe Jews); cf. David A. Fiensy, *Prayers Alleged to Be Jewish: An Examination of the Constitutiones Apostolorum* (Brown Judaic Studies 65; Chico, Calif.: Scholars' Press, 1985). This author combined Jewish material with Christian theology, often with interesting results (e.g., in 7.7 where Christ is described as the *only Son, God the Logos, the living Sophia, the first born of every creature, the angel of your [God's] great counsel, and your High-priest*). In its eight books, we find two references to the Melchizedek figure. The passages are 7.39.3: *Let him be educated in how God punished the wicked by water and fire, and glorified the saints in each generation: I mean Seth, Enos, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and his descendants, Melchizedek, Job, Moses, both Joshua and Chaleb, Phineas the priest, and the holy ones in each generation* (all translations are from ibid.). Here Melchizedek is described as a saint glorified by God, and a descendent of Abraham. Later the name of Melchizedek appears in a similar list, although now the figure is inserted into the line of the first priests (8.5.3): *You [God] are the one who gave decrees to the church through the coming of your Christ in the flesh by the witness of the Paraclete through your apostles and our bishops who are present by your grace; you are the one who foreordained from the beginning priests for the oversight of your people: Abel first, Seth and Enos and Enoch and Noah and Melchizedek and Job*. In both passages, the name of Melchizedek appears in a list of notable figures from Scripture, and in both cases with strong priestly connotations; cf. Goodenough, *By Light*, 331. These foreordained priests shared the obligation of

According to Tertullian's rewriting of Genesis, Melchizedek, as the priest of God Most High, was favoured by God in spite of the fact that, or perhaps because, he was both uncircumcised and did not observe the Sabbath. Tertullian's primary purpose in including the Melchizedek figure is to prove that circumcision is an unnecessary Jewish practice: *Sodann waren die darauf folgenden Patriarchen unbeschnitten, wie beispielsweise Melchizedek, der, obwohl er selbst unbeschnitten war, dem schon beschnittenen Abraham, als er aus dem Kampf zurückkam, Brot und Wein* (panem et vinum) *entgegenbrachte* (3.1). Tertullian's rewriting closely paraphrases the *Vorlage*, and his additions primarily serve to present Melchizedek's uncircumcised state as a "rhetorical synecdoche" for all people to follow.[427]

The new Law of Christ had, according to Tertullian, replaced the written Law of Moses, and was close to the universal law that God had given to Adam and Eve and which Melchizedek had observed.[428] As with the written Law of Moses, Tertullian wishes to show that circumcision was not the sign of salvation: rather, the original uncircumcised Adam, and those like him, such as Melchizedek, were "the typological figure[s] in whom God's intention for all humanity was revealed".[429]

4.3.3 Melchizedek in *Adversus Marcionem*

In Tertullian's refutation of Marcionism, *Adversus Marcionem*, the third edition of which was written between April 207 and April 208, Tertullian consents in books four and five to accept Marcion's version of the Gospel and epistles.[430] This approach was chosen by Tertullian to show that even this reduced textual corpus did not support Marcion's claims.

By 5.9, Tertullian has reached 1 Cor 15:12–28 and the question of resurrection of the dead. It is in this somewhat surprising context that

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governing God's people in each generation—and this also includes Melchizedek, here cast in a glorious function with neither polemical elements nor exalted traits. It is peculiar that in a later list of the righteous whose sacrifices have been accepted by God in the past, there is no mention of Melchizedek. The list begins with Abel and ends with Joel, and includes Abraham (7.37.1–3).

[427] Cf. Dunn, *Aduersus Iudaeos*, 155.

[428] Cf. Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five centuries* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2009), 272, and Dunn, *Aduersus Iudaeos*, 113.

[429] Ibid., 114.

[430] Cf. Ernest Evans, *Tertullian: Adversus Marcionem. Books 1 to 3*, OECT (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), xvii–xviii, and Sider, "Tertullian", 1107.

Tertullian employs the figure of Melchizedek, as his argument involves the interpretation of Psalm 110. Tertullian refutes the *Iudaei* who state that the Psalm's verse 4 refers to Hezekiah, rather than Christ. Tertullian further informs us that the origin of this interpretation was in Hezekiah setting *his throne at the right side of the temple* (5.9.7).[431] As noted in Section 4.1.2, this interpretation is only known from the writings of Justin (e.g. *Dial.* 33), and it is plausible that Tertullian is here repeating material from this earlier exposé of Melchizedek.

Tertullian refutes the Hezekiah interpretation thus: *God would not have said, I have begotten thee, except to a real son*. In addition, the reference in Ps 110:4 (*You are a priest forever*) could not refer to Hezekiah, as he was not a priest. Tertullian concludes his argument as follows: *What had Hezekiah to do with Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High, who himself was not circumcised* (altissimi sacerdotem et quidem non circumcisum)*, yet on accepting the offering of tithes blessed Abraham who was circumcised?* (5.9.9).

Tertullian thus repeats the mistake initially made by Justin (*Dial.* 33) in claiming that Abraham was circumcised at the time of his meeting with Melchizedek. Tertullian also interprets the *Vorlage* as indicating that Abraham received his blessing from God because he offered a tithe to the uncircumcised priest Melchizedek. This interpretation of the meeting emphasizes the function of Melchizedek. The reasons for Tertullian's focus on interpreting this passage are now revealed by the way he turns to describe the applicability of Melchizedek's priesthood to Christ: *For Christ, the particular and legitimate minister of God* (proprius et legitimus dei antistes)*, the pontifex of the uncircumcised priesthood* was sent to serve *among the gentiles from whom he was destined to find better acceptance, and will when he comes at the last time vouchsafe acceptance and blessing to the circumcision, the offspring of Abraham, which will at long last acknowledge him*. Tertullian interprets Christ as the *pontifex of the uncircumcised priesthood*, emphasizing that the priesthood is directed towards the uncircumcised; the circumcised, however, will realize that the only source of salvation is at the hands of Christ.

[431] Latin text from Emil Kroymann, ed., "Adversus Marcionem", in *Tertullianus Opera* (CCSL 1; Turnhout: Brepols, 1954). Translation from Ernest Evans, *Tertullian: Adversus Marcionem, books 4 to 5* (OECT; London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

4.3.4 Conclusions to Melchizedek in the Writings of Tertullian

In both *Adversus Judaeos* and *Adversus Marcionem*, Tertullian uses the Melchizedek figure for comparable purposes. In *Adversus Judaeos*, the figure is used to illustrate that, although uncircumcised, Melchizedek was favoured by God. This allows Tertullian to state that circumcision was an unnecessary Jewish practice that has been abolished by the Law given by Christ. In *Adversus Marcionem*, Tertullian turns to the interpretation of Psalm 110, and similarly to Justin argues against the interpretation of the *Iudaei* as referring to Hezekiah. Tertullian instead argues that only Christ, God's son, could be the one addressed in the Psalm. Tertullian again turns the argument into one refuting circumcision, and repeats his claim that this Jewish practice was abolished for all people by the coming of Christ.

The repeated mistake of Melchizedek encountering a circumcised Abraham, as well as the Hezekiah interpretation of Ps 110:4, reveals a dependency on the writings of Justin (5.7–9), although Tertullian does not take his interpretation of the Melchizedek figure quite so far. Tertullian nonetheless follows Justin in employing the figure mainly to prove his Christological points. Tertullian, in his refutation of Marcion and of the Hezekiah interpretation of Psalm 110, turns to the figure of Melchizedek chiefly to establish the priesthood of Christ. His Melchizedek figure is thus part of the neutral category of interpretation. Tertullian's treatment of the figure ignores all aspects that do not serve his theological argument: the extolling of the priesthood of Christ.

4.4 Cyprian of Carthage

4.4.1 Introduction to Cyprian

In two of the texts written by Cyprian of Carthage (ca. 200–268), we again encounter the figure of Melchizedek.[432] Cyprian, a well-educated metropolitan living in Roman North Africa, wrote numerous texts and letters, mostly to his peers in Spain, Gaul, and Italy. The subject covered by

[432] Cf. Arthur C. Coxe, *Introductory Notice to Cyprian* (*ANF* 5; ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995), 263.

these texts include a plethora of matters relating to the Christian faith from ca. 247 to shortly before his beheading.[433]

4.4.2 Melchizedek in *Ad Quirinum*

Soon after Cyprian was elected bishop of Carthage in 248, he began working on a compendium of Scriptural passages addressed to his friend Quirinus. In the first of these three books, Cyprian seeks to show how all Jews had fallen from the grace of God through their rejection of Christ, and only by joining the Christian church and receiving baptism could they hope to regain salvation.[434]

In this context, Cyprian refers to the figure of Melchizedek twice: the first (7.17) is a direct quotation of Ps 110:4.[435] Cyprian's primary use of the Melchizedek figure in *Ad Quirinum*, however, occurs again in the context of a discussion on the issue of circumcision. Cyprian lists various Scriptural figures that were all considered righteous, despite being uncircumcised, in his attempt to explain why circumcision was an unnecessary evil: *Also, because Adam was first made by God uncircumcised, and righteous Abel, and Enoch, who pleased God and was translated; and Noah, who, when the world and men were perishing on account of transgressions, was chosen alone, that in him the human race might be preserved.*

Among these notable Scriptural figures, we once again find Melchizedek. Cyprian describes him as *the priest according to whose order Christ was*

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[433] Cf. Michael A. Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible: A Study in Third-Century Exegesis* (Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Hermeneutik 9; Tübingen: J. B. C. Mohr, 1971), 16–17; Michael M. Sage, *Cyprian* (Patristic Monograph Series 1; Cambridge, Mass.: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1975), 366; Graeme W. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian, volume 1: Letters 1–27* (*ACW* 43; New York: Newman Press, 1984), 5–7; Coxe, *Cyprian*, 263; and Robert D. Sider, "Cyprian", in *EEC* (ed. Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris; New York: Garland, 1998), 306–307.

[434] Cf. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 19; Sage, *Cyprian*, 143–144, 382–383; and Sider, "Cyprian", 307.

[435] 7.17: *In the cixth Psalm: Before the morning star I begot you. The Lord has sworn, and He will not repent, You are a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek.* Latin text of *Ad Quirinum* from Robert Weber, "Ad Quirinum", in *Sancti Cypriani episcopi opera* (CCSL 3; Turnhout: Brepols, 1972), 1-179. English translations from Robert E. Wallis, *Cyprian: The Treatises of Cyprian* (*ANF* 5; ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and Arthur C. Coxe; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995).

promised (1.8).[436] This passage mirrors the interpretation of Psalm 110 in Hebrews and Justin and Tertullian's discussions of circumcision. Cyprian has the Melchizedek figure cast as an uncircumcised righteous priest, whose primary function is to provide a model of the coming Christ.

4.4.3 Melchizedek in *Ad Caecilium*

In one of Cyprian's later epistles, addressed to Caecilius, the author attempts to correct a number of errors in the Eucharistic practises of his fellow bishops (63.1).[437] In the process, Cyprian enters a discussion of the error of omitting wine from the water in the Eucharist (63.5). Cyprian supports the necessity of the wine by referring to a range of figures from Hebrew Scripture. The actions of these figures, including Noah, Abraham, and Melchizedek, serve to provide *prophetic anticipations* of the *sacred mystery* (sanguis . . . qui scripturarum omnium sacramento ac testimonio praedicetur) (63.3.1).

Melchizedek's actions are said to have *foreshadowed in mystery a type of the Lord's sacrifice* (63.4.1). In this case, the foreshadowing was primarily the bread and wine that Melchizedek brought to Abraham. In

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[436] A similar treatment is found in the brief mention of the figure of Melchizedek attributed to the later bishop of Antioch, Eustathius (ca. 325); cf. Rowan A. Greer, "Eustathius of Antioch", in *EEC* (ed. Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris; New York: Garland, 1998), 403. In Fragment 64, we find: "Melchizedek, since he was clothed with the image of the type of Christ and obviously wore the sign of royal dignity, was indeed like Christ. But, although he was great and distinguished, he passed on an image similar to and fashioned like the person of Christ. Nevertheless, John [the Baptist] with his own hands embraced and led into the waters the Word made flesh Himself, who is the archetype of the image and seal" (translation from Rowan A. Greer, *The Captain of Our Salvation: A Study in the Patristic Exegesis of Hebrews* [Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese 15; Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1973], 143). The theological implication of Eustathius' text is that, although Melchizedek was *clothed with the image of the type of Christ* and was *like Christ*, he was still inferior to John the Baptist. This may indicate that Eustathius was involved in a polemical treatment of the exalted Melchizedek traditions, a suspicion strengthened by the emphasis Eustathius puts on Melchizedek's human nature. According to Eustathius, Melchizedek was not without genealogy; rather his lineage was not mentioned in Scripture because he was of Canaanite descent.

[437] Caecilius was, presumably, the bishop Caecilius a Biltha, mentioned in Cyprian's Epistle 67. While most of Cyprian's epistles may be ordered in a rough chronology through cross-references, *Ad Caecilium* "falls into no discernible time period", according to Sage, *Cyprian*, 366. Fahey, *Cyprian*, 22, nonetheless suggests the year 253. Latin text from Gerardus F. Diercks, ed., *Sancti Cypriani Episcopi Epistularium*, *vol. 3c:3b* (CCSL 3; Turnhout: Brepols, 1996). Translation from Wallis, *Cyprian*.

doing so, *Melchizedek indeed portrayed a type of Christ*, a conclusion that Cyprian bases on Psalm 110:4 (worded similarly to *Ad Quirinum* 7.17). According to this interpretation, it was the Holy Spirit who in verse four was *speaking in the person of the Father to the Son*. To Cyprian, the priestly order of Melchizedek derives from the priest-king's offering of a blessing to God and of bread and wine to Abraham. This sacrifice serves as a type of the sacrifice of Christ, as Cyprian puts it in a rhetorical question: *Who is more truly a priest of the most high God than our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered sacrifice to God the Father and made the very same offering as Melchizedek had done, viz. bread and wine, that is to say His own body and blood?*

Cyprian continues his exposé of Melchizedek, describing how Melchizedek's blessing of Abraham has been transferred to all Christian believers (63.4.2). Cyprian concludes the passage by stating in 63.4.3 that *it was in order that the blessing might be duly bestowed upon Abraham through Melchizedek the priest, that before it there preceded a symbol of Christ's sacrifice, consisting, of course, in the offering of the bread and the wine. And when the Lord brought to fulfilment and completion that symbolic action, he offered bread and a cup mixed with wine, and so He who is Fullness itself fulfilled the truth of that prefigured symbol* (ueritatem praefiguratae imaginis). Cyprian presents the figure of Melchizedek with his priesthood as a prefiguration of Christ, expressed as a *type* of Christ (*Melchisedech typum Christi portaret* (63.4)), an *image* of Christ (63.4), and the prefiguration of Christ (*praefigurare* (63.4), although Cyprian does not refer to Melchizedek as a *figura*).[438]

4.4.4 Conclusions to Melchizedek in the Writings of Cyprian

In *Ad Quirinum*, Cyprian has rewritten Gen 14:18–20 by removing most of the figure's unique aspects (the location of Salem, the royal function, the tithe, and so on). These changes create a passage entirely focused on Melchizedek's priestly functions. The purpose of this exegesis is to emphasize that circumcision is an unnecessary custom, as God favoured his priest, even though Melchizedek was uncircumcised. This Melchizedek was also a type of Christ (*typum Christi portaret*), and Christ's priesthood (which, according to Cyprian, is the one discussed in Ps 110) derives from Melchizedek and his sacrifice. To Cyprian, Christ fulfilled the reality of the prefigured image—that is, Melchizedek.

[438] Fahey, *Cyprian*, 614–620.

In addition, Cyprian uses the bread and wine offered by Melchizedek as a prefigurement of the Eucharist. Christ, *perficiens et adimplens*, fulfils Melchizedek's offer of the bread and wine. As an illustrative example of the neutral category of interpretation, Cyprian in his *Ad Quirinum* uses only the few remaining elements that were central to his theological discussion, and reveals no knowledge of either of the two other categories. Repeating material from Justin, Tertullian, and Clement, Cyprian continues the tradition of deploying the figure of Melchizedek against the practice of circumcision and as a prefigurement of the Eucharist.

4.5 *Targum Onqelos*

4.5.1 Introduction to *Targum Onqelos*

In the course of this investigation, we will examine six different examples of the Melchizedek figure in the Targumim, the Aramaic translations of the Pentateuch.[439] The first of these, *Targum Onqelos*, will be analysed presently, while the remaining examples will be dealt with in Chapter 5. The reason for this division is the different approach to the Genesis passage taken in the two groups of Targumim. As we will discover, *Targum Onqelos* presents a reproduction close to the *Vorlage*, while the remaining Targumim all have rewritten the passage in significant ways. Thus, *Targum Onqelos* will be analysed here, while the discussion of the different Melchizedek figures in the Targumim will be conducted following the analysis of the Targumim in Section 5.2

Dating *Targum Onqelos*, the preferred Targumim of the Babylonian rabbis, is troublesome. Numerous manuscripts of this Targum have survived, the oldest of which was copied in 1048 C.E. According to the hypothesis shared by most scholars,[440] *Targum Onqelos* was composed in two stages; the first version ("proto-Onqelos") originated in first or second-century Palestine. This version was revised in Babylonia during the third or

[439] For a general introduction to the Targumim, see Martin McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis* (ArBib: The Targums; ed. Kevin Cathcart, Martin McNamara, and Michael Maher; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 1–12; Harry Sysling, *Tehiyyat Ha-Metim: The Resurrection of the Dead in the Palestinian Targums of the Pentateuch and Parallel Traditions in Classical Rabbinic Literature* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1996), 3–24; and Paul V. M. Flesher, *The Targums: A Critical Introduction* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2011), 3–68.

[440] Cf. Flesher, *Targums*, 84–85, for fuller treatment of these and other theories.

fourth century. Although the first version may well be older than the Palestinian Targumim (and is perhaps also their source), distinguishing which material derives from this source and which does not is an ongoing debate which will not be entered into here. We will thus consider *Targum Onqelos* to be a composition dating to the third or fourth century. This situates *Targum Onqelos* between the presumably younger Palestinian Targumim and the later *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, all of which we will return to shortly.

4.5.2 Melchizedek in *Targum Onqelos*

In *Targum Onqelos*' treatment of Gen 14, we find a passage that repeats the material of the *Vorlage* without significant changes. Instead of a negative treatment of the Melchizedek figure, we find a close repetition of the Genesis story: *Now Melkhizedek, king of Jerusalem, brought out bread and wine, and he ministered before God Most High. And he blessed him by saying, "Blessed be Abram before God Most High whose possessions are heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High who had delivered your enemy into your hand and has given him a tenth of everything*".[441]

Nowhere in this passage do we find any notable exceptions to the original text. The only minor change is that Melchizedek is no longer described as a priest, but rather as one *ministering before God Most High*. *Targum Onqelos* does not elsewhere refrain from negatively remarking on Scriptural figures (for instance, *Tg. Onq.* Gen 5:24 emphasizes that Enoch actually died: *And Enoch walked in reverence of the Lord, then he was no more, for the Lord had caused him to die*), but in the Melchizedek passage, there is no reduction in the importance of the Melchizedek figure.

4.5.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in *Targum Onqelos*

In *Targum Onqelos*, we find a faithful reproduction of Gen 14:18–20. The Melchizedek passage in *Targum Onqelos* is thus a close paraphrase of the Genesis passage, and constitutes a text that falls into our category of neutral interpretation, similarly to the case of *Genesis Apocryphon*.

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[441] Translation from Bernard Grossfeld, *The Targum Onqelos to Genesis* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1988).

That *Targum Onqelos* presents the Genesis passage in this manner is something of a conundrum. As we will discover, the remaining Targumim from our time period differ from *Targum Onqelos* in their reproduction of this passage. The *Fragmentary Targums*, *Targum Neofiti*, and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* all contain a shared polemical tradition on the Melchizedek figure. We will further discuss why *Targum Onqelos* constitutes a departure from the Targumic tradition in Section 5.2.

4.6 The Babylonian Talmud: The *Baba Batra* Tractate

4.6.1 Introduction to *Baba Batra*

In the tractates of the Babylonian Talmud (composed between the third and sixth centuries),[442] we find the Melchizedek figure mentioned thrice in three different tractates. As was the case with the Targumim, the three instances represent usages belonging to different categories of interpretations. We will now examine the *Baba Batra* tractate, and in the following chapters, we will find examples of the polemical category of interpretation in the *Nedarim* tractate, and traces of an exalted Melchizedek in the *Sukkah* tractate. We will analyse each of these tractates in their own right, and once this has been done, we will in Section 6.6.3 discuss why we find three different Melchizedeks within the Babylonian Talmud.

The *Baba Batra* (*Last Gate*) is the last of three tractates within the *Seder Nezikin* (*Order of the Damages*), and deals with "claims of right to do or possess something, or to prevent another from doing or possessing something".[443] In this unlikely place in the Babylonian Talmud, we find a reference to the Melchizedek figure.

[442] While the rabbis responsible for the text lived during these centuries, the final redaction includes material that may originate in the 1st–2nd centuries C.E.; cf. Richard Kalmin, "The Formation and Character of the Babylonian Talmud", in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, *vol. 4* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 840–843.

[443] Maurice Simon, *Baba Bathra* (Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud; ed. Isidore Epstein; London: Soncino Press, 1935), xi.

4.6.2 Melchizedek in *Baba Batra*

The discussion of the correct method of dividing open areas (11a) has moved on to the size of the scroll of Law (14a), and from there it has begun to consider the correct order of the Prophets and the Hagiographa. This raises the question of who wrote the Scriptures. The answer, according to *Baba Batra*, is (14b): *Moses wrote his own book and the portion of Balaam and Job. Joshua wrote the book which bears his name and eight verses of the Pentateuch. Samuel wrote the book which bears his name and the Book of Judges and Ruth*.[444]

The *Baba Batra* then turns to the Psalms, stating that, although *David wrote the Book of Psalms*, he used preexisting material in some cases. This included *the work of the elders, namely, Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, Heman, Yeduthun, Asaph, and the three sons of Korah. Jeremiah wrote the book which bears his name, the Book of Kings, and Lamentations* (14b-15a). In this context, Melchizedek is counted among the ten elders from whom David alledgedly incorporated material into his Psalms. According to this list, Melchizedek was an author of some material in the Book of Psalms, and presumably this was Psalm 110.

4.6.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in *Baba Batra*

The brief reference to Melchizedek in *Baba Batra* represents a unique tradition in which Melchizedek wrote Psalm 110. This use is characterized by the same elements as the neutral category of interpretation, in that Melchizedek is employed here primarily to answer a theological problem, in this case the question of who wrote Psalm 110. *Baba Batra* thus contributes evidence of a more multifaceted use of the figure in rabbinic texts than is normally assumed. As we will discuss in more detail in later chapters, each of the three categories of interpretation are represented within the Babylonian Talmud. As with the Targumim, these traditions make clear the diverse uses of the figure, even within collections of texts.

[444] All translations of the *Baba Batra* are from ibid.

CHAPTER 5. POLEMICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MELCHIZEDEK FIGURE

5.1 Clement of Alexandria

5.1.1 Introduction to Clement

Titus Flavius Clement (ca. 150–215) was born in either Athens or Alexandria, and was a convert to Christianity. Few other facts are known about him, and even his most illustrious pupil, Origin, never mentions his teacher.[445] His Christology centred on Jesus as the eternal Logos, the "full and perfect revelation of God".[446] Clement's Logos is the instructor through which God enables humanity to be near to God in heaven.[447]

The author makes little use of the Melchizedek figure, although he employs texts by authors who employed the figure far more extensively, such as Philo (as evidenced from Clement's use of Logos), the author of Hebrews, and Josephus. The only text in which Clement refers to the figure is the *Stromata* (whose lengthy full title is *Miscellanies* (Stromateis) *of Notes of Revealed Knowledge in Accordance with the True Philosophy*),

[445] Cf., e.g., John Ferguson, *Clement of Alexandria: Stromateis* (FC 85; Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 3–4; 10–16; Arthur C. Coxe, *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria (Entire)* (*ANF* 2; ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994), 165–169; Walter H. Wagner, "Clement of Alexandria", in *EEC* (ed. Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris; New York: Garland, 1998), 262; and Andrew C. Itter, *Esoteric Teaching in the Stromateis of Clement of Alexandria* (Vigiliae Christianae Supplements 97; Boston, Mass.: Brill, 2009), 1. Itter describes the *Stromata* thus: "Reading the Stromateis for the first time is a unique experience; it is a text unlike any other from the ancient world. He wrote for a purpose and committed to posterity works that claim to teach the true philosophy of Christ" (ibid., 2).

[446] Ferguson, *Clement*, 4.

[447] Wagner, "Clement", 262.

which was described by the author as *a somewhat unorganized collection of flowers or trees which have grown together naturally* (6.2.1).[448]

5.1.2 Melchizedek in *Stromata*

In *Stromata* 2.5, Clement seeks to demonstrate that the classic Greek authors used material from Hebrew Scripture. One of his examples involves showing the manner in which the stories of King Minos were dependent on those describing Moses: *Now among the Greeks, Minos the king of nine years' reign, and familiar friend of Zeus, is celebrated in song; they having heard how once God conversed with Moses, "as one speaking with his friend". Moses, then, was a sage, king, legislator.* This leads Clement to compare Moses and Christ, stating that the latter *surpasses all human nature. He is so lovely, as to be alone loved by us, whose hearts are set on the true beauty, for "He was the true light"*. Christ was, according to Clement's interpretation, shown in Hebrew Scripture *to be a King, as such hailed by unsophisticated children and by the unbelieving and ignorant Jews, and heralded by the prophets. So rich is He, that He despised the whole earth, and the gold above and beneath it, with all glory, when given to Him by the adversary.*

In addition to this praise, Christ is also *the only High Priest, who alone possesses the knowledge of the worship of God*. Clement continues by stating that this High-Priestly Christ *is Melchizedek, "King of peace", the most fit of all to head the race of men* (βασιλεὺς εἰρήνης Μελχισεδέκ ὁ πάντων ἱκανώτατος ἀφηγεῖσθαι τοῦ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένους). *A legislator* (νομοθέτης) *too, inasmuch as He gave the law by the mouth of the prophets, enjoining and teaching most distinctly what things are to be done, and what not. Who of nobler lineage than He whose only Father is God?* (2.5.21).

In his argument, Clement has taken the theology of Hebrews one step further: rather than Melchizedek serving as a model of the future Christ, Clement claims that Christ is Melchizedek. That Christ is the one true High Priest, the only priest who knows the proper way to worship God his father allows Clement to remove the figure of Melchizedek: For Clement, when Scripture was describing Melchizedek, it was describing Christ.

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[448] Greek text of the Stromata is from Otto Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus: Stromata*, 2. band (Stromata Buch 1–6) (GCS; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung 1906–1909). All translations of the *Stromata* are from Ferguson, *Clement*. Clement also quotes Ps 110:4 in 2.22 while discussing Heb 6:11–20.

Clement briefly returns to the figure of Melchizedek in the fourth book of the *Stromata*. In this context, Clement is discussing the definition of the perfect "Gnostic Christian".[449] He confirms his interpretation that Melchizedek, the *King of Peace*, was a description of Christ: *For Salem is, by interpretation, peace; of which our Saviour is enrolled King, as Moses says, Melchizedek king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who gave bread and wine, furnishing consecrated food for a type of the Eucharist* (ὁ τὸν οἶνον καὶ τὸν ἄρτον τὴν ἡγιασμένην διδοὺς τροφὴν εἰς τύπον εὐχαριστίας). *And Melchizedek is interpreted "righteous king"; and the name is a synonym for righteousness and peace* (4.161).

While Clement does not mention the tithe between Melchizedek and Abraham (who is not mentioned in this context at all), he does add an element to the Melchizedek figure: the bread and wine offered by Melchizedek to Abraham has, through the identification of the passage as a description of Christ, become a type of the Eucharist. Clement is the first to make the connection between the two instances of offering wine and bread, although this interpretation is repeated by later authors (such as in Cyprian's *Ad Caecilium* (see Section 4.4)).

5.1.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in *Stromata*

The two passages where Clement refers to Melchizedek in his *Stromata* both rely chiefly on the narrative material of Genesis interpreted through Psalm 110 (and, presumably, Hebrews) to become a description of Christ. As Philo had done before him, Clement allegorizes most elements of the Melchizedek figure.[450] Yet to Clement, Melchizedek serves as an allegory of Christ; for example, *Salem* means peace, of which Christ is the true king. Thus, Clement is entirely disinterested in the figure *per se*, to the extent that it becomes a revelation of Christ. Instead of a type of the future Christ (as is the case with the offering of the wine and bread, which have become a type of the Eucharist), the Melchizedek of Genesis is to Clement nothing more than a description of Christ.

Clement's use of the Melchizedek figure presents a text that, through its complete rewriting of the figure, has transformed the Genesis *Vorlage* into a description of a different figure, namely Christ. Clement's Melchizedek

[449] Clement's use of "Gnostic" here refers to "pertaining to knowledge of the Christian revelation" or the Christian with true knowledge, according to Ferguson, *Clement*, 11.

[450] Indeed, based on Clement's familiarity with the writings of Philo (cf. ibid., and Wagner, "Clement") the passage may be influenced by Philo's treatment of the figure.

figure is thus part of the category of interpretation in which the figure's significance is reduced. According to Clement, there was no ancient priest-king of Salem, but only a description of Christ. This may have been a polemical decision aimed at the exalted Melchizedek traditions, and perhaps against those texts that present a tradition of rewriting the Melchizedek figure further than is found in Hebrews (we will discuss these writings in the following chapter). However, apart from the complete removal of the figure in favour of Christ, there are few indications of what texts Clement's rewriting might be addressed to. What we find in the *Stromata* on the figure of Melchizedek is similar to the rewritings in the texts that we will examine next, but they redirect the thrust of their rewriting onto the figure of Shem, and later, onto Abraham, rather than Christ.

5.2 The Targumim

5.2.1 Introduction to the Targumim

In this chapter, we will analyse the Melchizedek figure of six Targumim, representing several centuries of exegetical development of the figure that differs from the brief reproduction of the *Vorlage* we found in *Targum Onqelos* (Section 4.5). These texts are the *Fragmentary Targums* (V, N, L, and P), *Targum Neofiti*, and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*. The first two, the *Targum Neofiti I* and the *Fragmentary Targums*, constitute (together with the *Cairo Genizah Manuscripts of the Palestinian Targums*) a subgroup called the Palestinian Targumim to the Pentateuch.[451] This group of

[451] So called because it was lot number one in a group of manuscripts bought by the Vatican Library from the Pia Domus Neophytorum in Rome. The college received the manuscript in 1602 from Ugo Boncampagni, who in turn had been given it by Rabbi Andrea de Monte in 1587. Initially, the codex was mislabelled by the Vatican Library as a copy of *Targum Onqelos*. It thus went unnoticed until Alejandro Díez Macho rediscovered it in 1949, and correctly identified the error in 1956; cf. McNamara, *Neofiti 1*, 7–9, and Michael Klein, "Notes on the Printed Edition of MS Neofiti 1", *JSS* 19 (1974): 216–218. Klein suggests (ibid., 218) that *Targum Neofiti* was copied in 1504 for the master general of the Augustinian Order, Giles of Viterbo; Codex Neofiti 1 contains the entire Pentateuch (with the exception of 36:22–30 and a few erased passages), and is embellished with numerous later marginal and interlinear glosses. These may, according to Shirley Lund, "An Argument for Further Study of the Paleography of Codex Neofiti 1", *VT* 20 (1970): 57, and Ernest G. Clarke, "The Neofiti I Marginal Glosses and the Fragmentary Targum Witnesses to Gen. VI–IX", *VT* 22

"synoptic" Targumim will be discussed in the following under a single heading, as they are part of a shared tradition—a fact also revealed by the Melchizedek passages in these texts.[452]

(1972): 257–265, be attributed to ten different hands. Their contents often correspond with material from the *Fragmentary Targums*, the *Cairo Genizah Targums* (especially MS E), and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*; cf. McNamara, *Neofiti 1*, 9; 44–45, and Flesher, *Targums*, 74–75. The *Fragmentary Targums* consist of two main recensions that both appear to have had a liturgical function due to their brevity and content; cf. Michael L. Klein, "The Extant Sources of the Fragmentary Targum to the Pentateuch", *HUCA* 46 (1975): 115–137; Michael L. Klein, *The Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch According to Their Extant Sources, volume 1: Texts, Indices and Introductionary Essays* (Analecta Biblica 76; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980), McNamara, *Neofiti 1*, 4–5, and Flesher, *Targums*, 77–79. Manuscripts V (Vatican, Ebr. 440, a 13th-century manuscript), N (Nuremberg, Stadtbibliothek Solger 2.2o, a 13th-century manuscript), and L (Leipzig, Universität B.H., a 13th/14th-century manuscript) constitute one textual family, while P (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Hébr. 110, a 15th-century Spanish manuscript) is a somewhat separate recension, which, as we will see, is well-illustrated by these recensions' variant readings of the Melchizedek episode. The third major group of texts within the Palestinian Targumim are the *Cairo Genizah Manuscripts*, a collection of more than 200,000 fragments stemming from the genizot of the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Old Cairo, dating from the 8th to the 14th century; cf. McNamara, *Neofiti 1*, 7, and Flesher, *Targums*, 75–77. The fragments ("after Qumran, the most important source of ancient and medieval Jewish documents and texts discovered in modern times", according to Michael L Klein, *Genizah Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch I* [Cincinnati, Ohio: Hebrew Union College Press, 1986], xix), have unfortunately not preserved Gen 14. The closest passages are Gen 9:13 (MS E, Plate E) and 15:1 (MS 1134r) (ibid., xliv).

[452] The source behind this tradition and its relation with the Targumim have best been explained by Paul V. M. Flesher, who has mapped the connections between the Palestinian Targumim and their additions to the *Vorlage*. His survey revealed that, although each Targum has unique expansions, the majority of the textual additions appear to stem from one source. This source, termed the "Proto-Palestinian Targum Source", accounts for some five hundred and forty expansions, and is in many respects similar to the "Proto-Targum" source argued for by others, e.g., Stephen A. Kaufman, "Dating the Language of the Palestinian Targums and Their Use in the Study of First Century C.E. Texts", in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in Their Historical Context* (JSOTSup 166; ed. Robert Derek, George Beattie, and Martin McNamara; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 130. Cf. Paul V. M. Flesher, "Exploring the Sources of the Synoptic Targums to the Pentateuch", in *Targum Studies 1: Textual and Contextual Studies in the Pentateuchal Targums* (ed. Paul V. M. Flesher; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars' Press, 1992), 101–134, and Flesher, *Targums*, 154–158. Paul V. M. Flesher, "The Resurrection of the Dead and the Sources of the Palestinian Targums to the Pentateuch", in *Judaism in Late Antiquity. Part Four: Death, Life-after-Death, Resurrection and the World-to-Come in the Judaisms of Antiquity* (ed. Jacob Neusner, Alan J. Avery-Peck, and Bruce Chilton; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 313–314, states that "the expansions distinctive to the FTs [*Fragmentary Targums*] and TN [*Targum Neofiti*] merely 'season' the Proto-PT material in them". According to Flesher, the individual additions range from less than twenty in the *Fragmentary Targums,* to one hundred and sixty-four in *Targum Neofiti*, and more than 1,500 for *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*.

In addition to the Palestinian Targumim, we will analyse the Genesis passage in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*. Although this presents a relatively late text, and thus represents a departure from the chronological structure of this work, the close relation between these traditions makes this approach the most practical.

Dating Targumim is inherently difficult, and is even more so in the case of the Palestinian Targumim, as the manuscripts themselves are fairly young: the oldest, *Cairo Genizah Targum* MS E, dates to the eighth century. However, there are a number of features that make it possible to plausibly date the autographs to between the late second and the early fourth centuries C.E.—in particular, their characteristic Aramaic dialect appears to be from ca. the second century, and the existence of the genre of written Targumim can be traced back to the first half of the second century B.C.E.[453] In addition, as the Targumim have been faithfully preserved through the ages (for example, Cairo Genizah MS E appears to be close to one of the youngest manuscripts, *Targum Neofiti*), we will follow McNamara, Flesher, and other scholars in regarding the Palestinian Targumim as close copies of autographs dating to between the late second and early fourth century C.E.[454]

The original composition of *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* is perhaps the most difficult to date of the Targumim. While its content is largely dependent upon its own unique source (the so-called "PJ unique") *Targum*

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[453] The dialect, termed "Jewish Targumic Aramaic" by Kaufman, "Dating", 121, has been dated to the 2nd century by Díez Macho, Le Déaut, and McNamara. Other suggestions have been made, e.g., by Kahle, who argued for a 1st-century origin, while Levy, Greenfield, and Fitzmyer have argued for dates as late as the 5th century C.E. A summary of the discussion can be found in McNamara, *Neofiti 1*, 13–23 (which includes a study of the Latin and Greek loan words in the Palestinian Targumim (ibid., 16–23)); and Malcolm Doubles, "Indications of Antiquity in the Orthography and Morphology of the Fragment Targums", in *In Memoriam Paul Kahle* (ed. Matthew Black and Georg Fohrer; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1968), 88–89, who states that "it seems to be increasingly possible to argue that the linguistic evidences for a late dating of the Fragment Targum may simply be the unconscious reflection of the time of Medieval copyists". Anthony D. York, "The Dating of Targumic Literature", *JSJ* 5 (1974): 49–62, and Flesher, *Targums*, 151–166, provide an overview of the problems presented in trying to date the Targumim and a review of the suggestions made so far. For the evidence of written Targumim from Qumran (11QtargJob, 4QtargJob, 4QtargLev, and two verses inscribed on a bowl); see Klein, *Genizah*, xx, and Sysling, *Tehiyyat*, 14–15

[454] Cf. McNamara, *Neofiti 1*, 45–46, and Flesher, *Targums*, 81–82, who concludes that they were "created originally sometime between the late second century and the early third century". Gabriele Boccaccini, "Targum Neofiti as a Proto-Rabbinic Document: A Systematic Analysis", in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in Their Historical Context* (JSOTSup 166; ed. Robert Derek, George Beattie, and Martin McNamara; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 216–263, positions *Targum Neofiti* in the second half of the 2nd century.

Pseudo-Jonathan's language and remaining content appear to be a combination of the Palestinian Targumim and *Targum Onqelos*. The dating is further complicated by passages that appear to contain early first or second-century unique material, while other parts are from post-Islamic times (Gen 21:21, for example, where the names of Muhammad's wife and daughter appear). These issues have resulted in suggested dates ranging from the third to seventh century.[455] In the case of the Melchizedek passage, as we will see, the close connection to the Palestinian Targumim allows us to presuppose that this part of *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* represents material that is within or not far outside of the period of this dissertation.

5.2.2 Melchizedek in the Palestinian Targumim

The Melchizedek episode from Gen 14:18–20 survives in only two of the Palestinian Targumim textual families, the *Fragmentary Targums* (MSS V, N, L, and P), and *Targum Neofiti*.

The *Fragmentary Targums* have, true to their name, only preserved the following parts of the relevant passages: MSS V, N, L:

And Melchi Sedek, the king of Jerusalem, he was Shem the Great (שם רובה)*, he was a priest to God the Most High.*[456]

MS P has preserved a different version of Gen 14:18: *And Melchi Sedek, the king of Jerusalem—who was Shem the Great—was a priest of the Most High; he brought out food and wine, and he was standing and serving in the high priesthood before God the Most High God.*

Only *Targum Neofiti* has preserved the entire passage:

And the king of righteousness (מלכא צדק)*,*[457] *king of Jerusalem—he is Shem the Great—brought out bread and wine, for he was the priest who ministered in the high priesthood before the most High God. And he blessed him and said: "Blessed is Abram before the most High God who by his Memra* (מימר)[458] *created the heavens and the earth; and blessed is the*

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[455] Cf. Flesher, "Resurrection", 329, and Flesher, *Targums*, 87–89. According to Robert Hayward, "Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Anti-Islamic Polemic", *JSS* 24 (1989): 93, the traditional reason for dating *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* late (primarily, the supposed anti-Islamic content) is unfounded, and a post-Islamic date is "highly uncertain".

[456] Aramaic text from Michael L. Klein, *Fragment-Targums*. Translation, unless noted otherwise, from Martin McNamara, *Neofiti 1*.

[457] See below for this translation.

[458] Although the troublesome term *Memra*, termed "the best known and most problematic of all the distinctive phrases in which the Targumim abound" by Robert Hayward, *Divine Name and Presence: The Memra* (Oxford Centre for Postgraduate

most High God who crushed your enemies before you". And he gave him a tithe of everything.[459]

All three versions contain a range of minor and major exegetical changes to the *Vorlage*, as befits the nature of the Targumim, in which perceived exegetical problems were solved through extensive rewritings. However, all three versions share the most significant exegetical change. In each of the Targumim, the Melchizedek figure is identified as *Shem the Great* (שם רובה). This identification with Shem, the son of Noah, may have been made possible through a careful scrutiny of Scriptural chronology.[460] According to Genesis (19:2; 21:5; 25:25; 35:28), Shem was still alive during the last 100 years of Isaac's life, and as Abraham was 100 at the birth of Isaac and died at 175, a meeting between Abraham and Shem was possible during the last part of Abraham's life.[461] The change would thus be an exegetical solution to the problem of Abraham "demeaning" himself by tithing Melchizedek, by replacing Melchizedek by a different character of a more appropriate lineage,[462] or else the logical consequence of

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Hebrew Studies; Totowa, N.J.: Allanheld, Osmun, 1981), 1, appears here, its use is without consequence to the figure of Melchizedek. A discussion of its meaning and use thus lies outside the scope of this study. For a detailed discussion, see the early contribution by John W. Etheridge, *The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch: Genesis and Exodus*, reprint of 1862 (New York: Ktav, 1968), 26–31; Hayward, *Memra*; Bruce Chilton, "Typologies of Memra and the Fourth Gospel", in *Targum Studies 1: Textual and Contextual Studies in the Pentateuchal Targums* (ed. Paul V. M. Flesher; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars' Press, 1992), 89–100; and Daniel Boyarin, "The Gospel of the Memra: Jewish Binitarianism and the Prologue to John", *HTR* 94 (2001): 243–284.

[459] Aramaic text from Alejandro Díez Macho, *Targum Palestinense. Neophyti 1, Ms de la biblioteca Vaticana. Textos y estudios 7* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1968). Translation, unless noted otherwise, from McNamara, *Neofiti 1*.

[460] A similar identification appears in later Judaism (e.g., such passages are found in *Bereshit Rabbah* 43:6; *Wayyiqra Rabba (Qedoshim)* 25:6; *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan* 2; and *Pirge de-Rabbi Eliezer* 8:2); cf. McNamara, "Melchizedek", 12.

[461] In *Tg. Neof.* to Gen 24:62, Shem also encounters Isaac, and in 25:22 Rebekah. C. T. Robert Hayward, *Saint Jerome's Hebrew Questions on Genesis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 47, notes a similar tradition attested by Jerome, who writes that the "Hebrews" identify Melchizedek with a *man [who] is Sem, the son of Noah, and by calculating the years of his life, they show that he lived up to the time of Isaac and they say that all the first-born sons of Noah were priests before Aaron perform the priestly office*.

[462] Cf. Marcel Simon, "Melchizédech dans la polémique entre juifs et chrétiens et dans la légende" *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 17 (1937): 58–93, who argues that this exegetical rewriting was aimed at the Christian use of the Melchizedek figure (i.e., in Hebrews and Justin Martyr). According to John C. McCullough, "Melchizedek's Varied Role in Early Exegetical Tradition", *Near East School of Theology Theological Review* 1 (1978): 52–66, the identification with Shem was an

Melchizedek being the first priest in Gen 14 and the later traditions of Noah's sons being the first priests.[463] Such a realignment of opposing traditions would be a typical approach to solving perceived troublesome passages in the Targumim.[464]

While this change may have begun in the *Fragmentary Targums* as a simple solution to a textual problem, most scholars have found it more plausible that this change was polemical in nature, aimed at the Christian appropriation of the Melchizedek figure (for instance, in Hebrews and Justin).[465] However, it is noteworthy that the Palestinian Targumim have chosen an identification with Shem, the son of Noah, considering the polemical relationship of Melchizedek and Shem (and Noah) in *2 Enoch*, as discussed in Section 3.10.2. As the passages do not contain any elements specifically aimed at Hebrews, and as the Palestinian Targumim are otherwise free of anti-Christian material, we will argue it to be more plausible that this polemical change was aimed at traditions similar to one or more of the previously analysed exalted Melchizedek traditions. This polemical change in the Palestinian Targumim may thus be aimed at the exegetical developments of the figure, rather than at a specific text. As such, it may just as easily have been aimed at the use of the Melchizedek we find in Hebrews, but also at texts similar to *2 Enoch*, and 11Q13. The change would thus not be specifically aimed at the Christian use, but against the anti-Levitical usage of the figure. This would thus represent an attempt by the *Anstalt* of the time (as represented by the Targumim) to prevent such sectarian interpretations, by first lessening the importance of, and then completely removing, the troublesome figure of Melchizedek.

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unpolemical attempt by the rabbis to explain why Abraham would have subordinated himself to Melchizedek in Gen 14. By transforming Melchizedek into Shem, Abraham would have been "paying respect to his own ancestor, not to an outside Canaanite king". Wuttke, *Melchisedech*, also suggests that the renaming of the Melchizedek figure was an attempt by the rabbis to explain the identity of the mysterious figure, and to attach the figure's important aspects to a better-known figure.

[463] According to Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, 317, the identification of Melchizedek with Shem served to build up "the priestly antecedents of Melchizedek in the context of the transmission of this priestly line to Abraham".

[464] McNamara, "Melchizedek", 15–16, suggests it may have been an attempt to redress what was viewed as an incorrect interpretation of Psalm 110 that legitimized the Hasmonean union of royalty and priesthood. A possible origin of the identification may be the blessing of Shem in Gen 9:26, which, as noted by Horton, *Melchizedek*, 117, reveal similarities from "a form-critical standpoint" to that of Gen 14.

[465] Cf., e.g., Jakob J. Petuchowski, "The Controversial Figure of Melchizedek", *HUCA* 28 (1957): 128, who saw it as a pre-Christian tradition reappropriated by Rabbi Ishmael and used against the Christians—although Petuchowski also (ibid., 129) found there to be "nothing more than innocent midrashic play in the identification of Melchizedek with Shem".

The second change is tied to the name Melchizedek itself. In the *Fragmentary Targums* (V, N, L, and P), we find the name rendered in its traditional form of מלכי צדק, but in *Targum Neofiti* we read מלכא צדק. The added emphatic א implies a deterministic use (*the king*), implying that we here find the title *the king of righteousness* used, rather than a proper name.[466] This change could have been caused by a scribal error, substituting א for the usual י, or it may have been a dittography resulting from the similar ending in the preceding verse (משרה מלכא). However, considering the reidentification of the Melchizedek figure with Shem discussed above, the two different versions of the passage may bear witness to editorial changes within the Palestinian Targumim. If so, this would mean that we witness in the *Fragmentary Targums* the initial stages of a lessening of the stature of the Melchizedek figure through the explanatory addition identifying it with Shem. The second stage occurs in *Targum Neofiti*, in which the author or a later editor has substituted the name with a title. This minor textual change completely removes the figure of Melchizedek from the text. This appears to have been a conscious exegetical rewriting, performed in order to further remove any traces of the Melchizedek figure and to in the process strengthen the Shem figure.[467]

Concerning the nature of the priesthood of Melchizedek, the Targumim state variously that *he was a priest to God the Most High* in the *Fragmentary Targums* and *he was the priest who ministered in the high priesthood before the most High God* in *Targum Neofiti*. Only infrequently do the Targumim employ the title *High Priest* (e.g., *Targum Neofiti* Exo 21:14; Lev 21:1). As the description of Melchizedek's service *as a priest to the Most High God* is elsewhere only applied to the priesthood of Aaron

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[466] Cf. Bernard Grossfeld, *Targum Neofiti 1: An Exegetical Commentary to Genesis* (ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman; New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 2000), 139, and Fitzmyer, *Essays*, 227–230, who translates "the upright king".

[467] The later *Targum of Psalms* (ca. the 8th or 9th century) also presents a rewriting of Psalm 110, by which the Melchizedek figure is completely removed. According to this interpretation, it was David whom God addressed and, because of this "v. 4 practically disappears in translation, and the Targum gives the non-historical, eschatological, understanding of the verse", according to McNamara, "Melchizedek", 19. McNamara (ibid.) provides the following translations of the verse: *You are appointed as chief for the world to come, on account of the merit that you have been a righteous king*. Elements from the tradition found in the Palestinian Targumim reappears in *Commentary on Genesis*, as well as in the *Armenian Hymns* 9:11–12, both commonly attributed to Ephrem the Syrian (ca. 306–373); cf. ibid., 14–15. In these passages, we find Melchizedek identified as Shem, a great king who was also a priest. In this version, he received the priesthood from Noah, his father, and lived in the east, between the sons of Ham and his own sons, serving as a buffer between the two, because he was afraid that the sons of Ham would turn his sons to idolatry.

and his sons, Melchizedek's priestly function may be considered the equivalent of High Priest.

While the issue of whether Abraham was the giver or the receiver of the tithe has not been clarified, the geographic location of the meeting from Gen 14 has now been clearly identified as Jerusalem. Yet new problems apparently arose from the precise pinpointing of the valley itself: the *Frg. Tg.* V, N, and L substitute *the Valley of Hazoza* (למישר דחזוזא) a name which perhaps derives from *vision* (חזוה).[468] *Targum Neofiti* changes this description significantly, identifying it as *in the Valley of the Orchards, that is the Valley of the king* (במישר פרדסיא הוא משרא דמלכא).

5.2.3 Melchizedek in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*

With the transition from the Palestinian Targumim to *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, we have crossed several centuries, passing over *Targum Onqelos* (Section 4.5). Despite this chronological divide, we find in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* a use of the Melchizedek figure similar in many ways to the pattern established by the Palestinian Targumim, *Targum Neofiti* in particular.

However, we do find a unique change in the initial sentence: *The righteous king—that is Shem, the son of Noah—king of Jerusalem*.[469] This reidentification and title follows the precedence set by *Targum Neofiti*, emphasized by the addition of *the son of Noah*. This Shem *went out to meet Abram, and brought him bread and wine; at that time he was ministering before God Most High*. Here, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* has changed the function of this Melchizedek-Shem. He is no longer clearly stated to have been a priest (as in the *Fragmentary Targums*) or part of the high priesthood (as in *Targum Neofiti*), but is instead said to have ministered, presumably at the temple. The passage in *Targum Onqelos* may have influenced this change, as we found there a similar description. Yet this would further add to the mystery of why *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* would have chosen to follow the polemical tradition from the Palestinian Targumim, while also inserting material from the nonpolemical passage in *Onqelos*.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan continues with Melchizedek-Shem blessing Abraham: *"Blessed be Abram from (before) God Most High, who created*

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[468] Cf. ibid., 22-23

[469] All translations from Michael Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis* (ArBib 1B; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 58.

the heavens and the earth for the sake of the righteous. And blessed be God Most High, who has made those who hate you like a shield that receives a blow". The blessing is similar to that in the Palestinian Targumim, although we do not find the additions from *Targum Neofiti*. Instead, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* has added a different description of God, which emphasizes that Abraham's miraculous victory was ensured by God. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* concludes the passage with *he gave him a tithe of all that he had brought back*. While the tithe was not changed in *Targum Neofiti* (and was not preserved in the *Fragmentary Targums*), we here find a rewriting that solves the problem by having Abraham tithe from the war spoils.

5.2.4 Conclusions to Melchizedek in the Targumim

The Targumim analysed in the preceding chapter present a common tradition. In the *Fragmentary Targums*, *Targum Neofiti*, and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, the Melchizedek figure has been significantly reduced in stature, marking the texts as representative of the polemical category of interpretation. Each Targumim presents several minor changes to the original text, in accordance with the traditional *modus operandi* of the genre. However, we also find a shared exegesis in which Melchizedek is removed from the Genesis passage. The substitution of Shem for Melchizedek appears to have evolved in stages: the initial stage is the development in the *Fragmentary Targums*. In these, the name has been changed to Shem, while the remaining (surviving) text is without significant changes. The second stage is found in *Targum Neofiti*, where the name of Melchizedek has been changed to a title describing Shem. The last stage, revealed by the much later *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, has the figure thoroughly replaced by the Shem figure.

The exegesis shared by these Targumim may have begun as a more or less innocent rewriting to identify this mysterious Melchizedek figure. The figure's sudden appearance in Genesis would have been explained by aligning it with traditions in which the first priests to serve Yahweh were Noah's sons, Shem in particular. However, with the changes exhibited by *Targum Neofiti*, the exegesis appears to have been purposefully executed. In addition to Melchizedek's substitution by Shem, the subtle change of the name into a title effectively removes any traces of what may have been viewed as an increasingly troublesome figure.

While the purpose of the rewritings in the Targumim analysed in this chapter is not apparent from the texts themselves, several scholars have

suggested that they are polemical in nature. It has been proposed that the exegesis was caused by the Christian use of Melchizedek figure, especially in Hebrews.[470] The identification of Melchizedek as Shem would be a counter to the claim in Heb 7:3 that he was ἀπάτωρ ἀμήτωρ ἀγενεαλόγητος. Yet there are no specific elements that might identify Hebrews as the catalyst for the Targumic changes to the Genesis passage.[471] Moreover, considering the exalted Melchizedek texts we have analysed (and have yet to examine), it is evident that the polemical rewriting may just as well have been directed at these.

Indeed, considering the lack of direct references to any one specific text, the polemical tradition in the Targumim is more likely to constitute an exegetical answer to the widespread pattern of sectarian appropriation of the figure, similar to those we found in *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 11Q13, *2 Enoch*, and will find again in the following chapter.[472] This would mark the Targumim as examples of writings that aim to preserve the priestly prerogative of the *Anstalt* against sectarian attempts to present a superior priesthood through the appropriation of the Melchizedek figure.

As noted in Section 4.5, *Targum Onqelos* does not share the tradition of a polemical treatment of Melchizedek. In essence, *Targum Onqelos* presents a mystery, while the other Targumim all have a polemical Melchizedek rendition. *Targum Onqelos* alone has remained faithful to the

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[470] Cf., e.g., ibid., 58n.44, and Poorthuis, "Enoch", 112–113; Others, e.g., Delcor, "Melchizedek", 130, have suggested that the changes to the Melchizedek figure in the Targumim were instead an attempt at "rehabilitating" the figure and of reaffirming his position in Judaism. Considering the emphasis put on removing the figure completely in favour of Shem, it appears more likely that the Targumim were engaged in a polemic against those traditions that had appropriated the figure to create *Melchizedek-centric* priesthoods (e.g., *2 Enoch*).

[471] This is also the conclusion reached by Longenecker, "Melchizedek", 166–167, although he suggests that the polemical content was aimed at "the Hasmonean-Sadducean preemption of this Old Testament king-priest in support of their own priestly-kingly prerogatives". Yet following our analysis of the Melchizedek figure from *2 Enoch* as the progenitor of the future priesthood, the derogatory treatment of Melchizedek might as well have been directed towards the Enochian Melchizedek figure.

[472] Indeed, it appears more likely that if the Targumim were targeting a single tradition, then this would have been one similar to what we found in *2 Enoch*. Considering the similarities between the Targumic passage and *2 Enoch* reveals that, in both cases, the figure from Gen 14 is inserted into the Enochian family, and thus a historical and chronological context is created for the figure. Both traditions focus on the priestly aspects; cf. Orlov, "Melchizedek", 30–31. The similarities are striking, with *2 Enoch* constituting a rewriting of the Melchizedek passage in opposition to the *Anstalt* of traditional Judaism, whereas the authors of the later Targumim may have been attempting in their rewritings to remove the possibility of a *Melchizedek-centric* priesthood.

Vorlage. It is unlikely that the changes in the Palestinian Targumim were unknown to the authors of *Targum Onqelos*, on account of the dates of composition, and also because of a similar tradition appearing in the Babylonian Talmud *Nedarim* tractate (as we will see). Instead, it appears that the authors of *Targum Onqelos* apparently found it more important to replicate the *Vorlage* faithfully in this case. This deviation from the pattern of a unified polemical rabbinic view of Melchizedek presents evidence of a usage of the Melchizedek figure that is more diverse than has been suggested.[473]

5.3 The Babylonian Talmud: The *Nedarim* Tractate

5.3.1 Introduction to *Nedarim*

We now arrive at the second of the references to the Melchizedek figure within the Babylonian Talmud. This occurs in the *Nedarim* (*Vows*) tractate, the third of the *Nashim* (*Women*) tractates. In *Ned.* 32b, we find a discussion of the life of Abraham which includes the passage from Gen 14:18–20. *Nedarim's* version of the passage marks an intensified continuation of the polemical treatment of the Melchizedek figure—a clearer condemnation of the Melchizedek figure than any we have so far encountered.

5.3.2 Melchizedek in the *Nedarim* Tractate

The reference in *b. Ned.* 32b begins as a quote attributed to *R. Zechariah [. . .] on R. Ishmael's authority*.[474] The rabbi claims that it was God's intention that the priesthood should originate in Shem: *to bring forth the priesthood from Shem, as it is written, and he was the priest of the most high God*. This text continues the tradition found in the Palestinian

[473] Cf. e.g., Poorthuis, "Enoch", 112–115.

[474] All translations are from Harry Freedman, *Nedarim* (Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud; ed. Isidore Epstein; London: Soncino Press, 1985). Concerning the problematic issue of attributing sayings to a specific rabbi, see Kalmin, "Talmud", 860–861.

Targumim, with Melchizedek absorbed into the Shem figure. The transition is performed without any explanation of this identification, but from the following passages, there is no question of whom the text is referring to. The lack of any explanation of the change in name indicates that the author (and perhaps the intended readers) was familiar with traditions similar to those found in the Targumim.[475]

The actors established, the text continues: *But because he gave precedence in his blessing to Abraham over God, He brought it forth from Abraham*. This change in the origin of the priesthood is explained in the following: *Abraham said to him, "Is the blessing of a servant to be given precedence over that of his master?" Straightway it was given to Abraham*. Abraham brings to God's attention the problem of the wrong order of the blessings. This causes God to deviate from his initial plan, instead transferring the priestly status to Abraham.

This transference of priestly rights is supported by a quotation from Ps 110:4, which is here given a new inflection; it is interpreted as meaning, "*because of the words of Melchizedek*". Because Abraham brought the issue to the attention of God, Abraham becomes the one who, in verse 4, is said to be *the priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek*. The last line of *Ned.* 32b emphasizes this: *And he was a priest of the most High God*, [implying that] *he was a priest but not his seed*. The rabbi's version presents a Shem (Melchizedek), a priest who had been the intended source of the later priesthood. However, because of a mistake, he and his descendants were not to become priest, that honour now being granted to Abraham and his descendants.[476]

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[475] The tradition of Melchizedek-as-Shem continues in the later rabbinic texts, e.g., *Lev. Rab.* 25:6; *Num. Rab.* 4:8; and *Gen. Rab.* 56:10. The *Genesis Rabbah* also contains a passage (cf. Horton, *Melchizedek*, 116) relating how Abraham feared that Shem would attack him because Abraham had killed his sons (cf. Gen 15:1), while at the same time, Melchizedek-Shem feared Abraham because his sons had acted so wickedly.

[476] This interpretation of the last line differs from the note added by the commentator Ran (Nissem ben Reuven, 14th century): *Though Abraham was a descendant of Melchizedek, and thus the priesthood was inherited by the latter's seed, yet this was through the merit of Abraham, not of Melchizedek*. Cf. Freedman, *Nedarim*. Ran, apparently, interpreted Abraham as a descendent of Melchizedek, perhaps on account of the Shem-Melchizedek confusion, although Ran uses the name *Melchizedek* twice. The interpretation we have made here is supported in the parallel passage in the later *Lev. Rab.* 25:6, where we find that Rabbi Ishmael indeed believed Abraham to have been a High Priest (*R. Ishmael used to say: 'Abraham was high priest. This is what is written: The Lord has sworn and will not repent, 'you are a priest forever''*; Cf. Horton, *Melchizedek*, 119). We find a parallel to this in the *Pal. Tgs.* to Gen 49:3 where Reuben, because of his sinful actions, loses his right to the "high priesthood", which is given to Levi. This is a noteworthy parallel, as the Palestinian Targumim do not include a similar account in regards to Melchizedek.

5.3.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in the *Nedarim* Tractate

The version of Gen 14:18–20 found in the Babylonian Talmud *Nedarim* tractate presents an exegesis that effectively removes the importance previously ascribed to the Melchizedek figure. The first part of the *Nedarim* passage is a repetition of the tradition that we encountered in the *Fragmentary Targums* and *Targum Neofiti*, in which the name has been removed and the figure is reidentified as Shem. However, the second part presents a unique tradition in which the priesthood is also separated from the figure, due to the sacrilegious sequence of the blessings in Gen 14:19–20.

According to the interpretation in *Nedarim*, the action of the amalgamated Melchizedek-Shem figure in giving *precedence in his blessing to Abraham over God* made it impossible for the figure to continue as the origin of the traditional priesthood ascribed to the figure. Based on this mistake, on Abraham's reporting of the error to God, and on a unique interpretation of Genesis and Psalm 110, the sidelining of Melchizedek has also fallen on Shem. Through the detailed study of the Genesis text, a careful midrash was created to explain how and why Melchizedek's troublesome priesthood was removed by God and transferred to Abraham, thus extolling the patriarch further. As a consequence of this exegesis, the Melchizedekian priesthood has disappeared from Scripture and the Levitical priesthood has become the dominant and original priesthood—all without dispensing with any of the original text from Hebrew Scripture.

The *Nedarim* tractate has continued the tradition found in the Palestinian Targumim, but carries the polemical approach further by removing any traits from the figure upon which a future priesthood could be built. This tradition, which with increasing tenacity sought to remove all importance from Melchizedek, finds its culmination during our time period in *Nedarim*. It presents a tradition in which Melchizedek's priesthood is once again of central importance to the exegesis. This time however, the rewriting serves both to further extol Abraham and to remove the possibility of a sectarian priesthood being founded on the basis of the exalted Melchizedek traditions.

As was the case with the parallel tradition in the Palestinian Targumim, this exegesis appears to be a polemical attack aimed at exalted Melchizedek traditions. The tractate thus represents a rewriting of the Melchizedek traditions that is definitively part of the polemical category of interpretation. Yet again, the object of the polemical treatment of Melchizedek and the priesthood associated with the figure is unknown. As with the earliest instance of the tradition, it has been suggested that the exegesis was aimed

at the Christian use of Melchizedek in Hebrews.[477] Yet in the case of the *Nedarim* tractate, our conclusions from the Targumic discussion apply in full: it is more likely that the furthering of the polemical Melchizedek tradition was aimed not at Hebrews, but instead constitutes a furthering of the attack, begun in the Palestinian Targumim, against the exalted Melchizedek traditions in circulation during our time period These exalted traditions are best exemplified by *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 11Q13, and *2 Enoch*, although we will, in the following chapter, encounter evidence of an additional wealth of traditions that similarly present exalted Melchizedeks.

[477] Cf., e.g., Delcor, "Melchizedek", 132.

CHAPTER 6. EXALTED INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MELCHIZEDEK FIGURE

6.1 The *Melchizedek Tractate*

6.1.1 Introduction to the *Melchizedek Tractate*

We find Melchizedek mentioned in only one of the texts found at Nag Hammadi, but in it he is cast as the main protagonist. The text, aptly named the *Melchizedek Tractate*, is one of three tractates within Codex IX.[478] This codex was copied some time during the fourth century, based on an autograph dating to ca. late second century.[479] Although heavily damaged,

[478] The codex was variously designated as Codex VIII, X, IV, or V, until Martin Krause, "Zum koptischen Handschriftenfund bei Nag Hammadi", *Mitteilungen des deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 19 (1963): 128, gave the codex its current designation. This codex was among the twelve papyrus codices (and one tractate from a thirteenth) found in December 1945 near the village of Hamra Dom in Upper Egypt (ca. 10 km northeast of Nag Hammadi). For a more detailed description of this discovery, see James M. Robinson, "Introduction", in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (ed. James M. Robinson and Marvin W. Meyer; Leiden: Brill, 1977), 21–23.

[479] The three tractates within Codex IX appear to be the work of different translators (e.g., the second tractate is marred by more linguistic errors than the other two), but the entire codex was the work of a single scribe, whose work has been characterized as both "pleasing to the eye" and "reflect[ing] considerable practice" (Birger A. Pearson and Søren Giversen, *Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X* [NHS 15, StPB 15; ed. Birger A. Pearson; Leiden: Brill, 1981], 9). It has been suggested, by Martin Krause, "Der koptische Handschriftenfund bei Nag Hammadi: Umfang und Inhalt", *Mitteilungen des deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 18 (1962): 110, among others, that the scribe was identical to the one who copied codices IV, V, VI, and VIII, although such similarities might also have been caused by the influence of a single predominant scribal school; cf. Stephen Emmel, "The Nag Hammadi Codices Editing Project: A Final Report", *The American Research center in Egypt, Inc., Newsletter* 104 (1978): 28; Pearson and Giversen, *Codices*, 14; Codex IX has been dated to ca. between 330 and 350, by ibid., by the scribe's hand resembling that found in manuscript BM Or. 7594. There are few indications to base the date of the autograph on, but the current scholarly consensus places it towards the end of the 2nd century C.E.; cf. ibid., 40; Helderman, "Wirkung", 354; and Jaan Lahe, *Gnosis und Judentum: Alttestamentliche*

the tractate contains a Melchizedek that in intricacy is rivalled by few other texts—a tripartite figure consisting of the Melchizedek from Genesis, a Melchizedek from the time of the author, and a future eschatological saviour Melchizedek. We will argue in the following that these three Melchizedeks were created through a compilation of the exalted Melchizedek traditions and Hebrews in order to establish a superior sectarian priesthood.

The genre of the *Melchizedek Tractate* appears to be that of the apocalypse; the tractate is attributed to a hero of the past (i.e., Melchizedek) who receives secrets of the heavenly world and of future events by angelic messenger(s), and the term ⲛⲉⲉⲓⲁⲡⲟⲕⲁⲗⲩⲫⲓⲥ (*apocalypses*) also appears at the end of the tractate (27.3).[480] This apocalyptic text is set in a cultic setting that, judging by its focus on ritual actions (such as Melchizedek's baptism and heavenly praise) and by the wording of the prayer in 1.18–11 (*and that I might put on friendship and goodness as a garment, O brother*), may have been part of an initiation ritual or a priestly investiture.[481]

The *Melchizedek Tractate* shares the leather covers of Codex IX with two other tractates: the *Thought of Norea* (27.11–29.5), and the *Testimony of Truth* (29.6–end).[482] Under H.-M. Schenke's delineation of the Nag

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und jüdische Motive in der gnostischen Literatur und das Ursprungsproblem der Gnosis (NHS 75; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 317.

[480] Coptic text and translations are from Pearson and Giversen, *Codices* unless otherwise noted.

[481] Cf. ibid., 20. The first lines of the tractate (1.5–11), though heavily damaged, seem to be a vocative, stating "Jesus Christ, the Son", thus suggesting that the tractate originally began with a prayer offered by Melchizedek to Jesus Christ; cf. ibid., 20, 25–26.

[482] It remains a debated issue whether or not the placement of texts within the Nag Hammadi codices should be regarded as significant. Although there appears to be little system in some (e.g., Codex VI), some scholars have identified possible patterns within other codices. In the case of Codex IX, such a system has been put forward by Michael A. Williams, "Interpreting the Nag Hammadi Library as 'Collection(s)' in the History of 'Gnosticism(s)'", in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification: Actes du colloque tenu à Québec du 15 au 19 septembre 1993* (Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi. Études 3; ed. Louis Painchaud and Anne Pasquier; Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 34–35, among others. According to Williams, the *Thought of Norea* served as a transition between the prophetic visions of the *Melchizedek Tractate* and the *Testimony of Truth*. The link between these two texts is suggested to have consisted chiefly of a shared focus on a future saviour. If this is the case (and assuming Codex IX is not merely a random collection of texts), this would indicate a careful arrangement of the texts by the scribe, whereby "works that to us seem theologically conflicting could be read as components of the same message, conveying the same fundamental views and values" (ibid., 40). Williams finds it apparent that these three texts, though different in most aspects, exhibit "undeniable continuities among them involving distinctive nomenclature and mythic themes that indicate that they are close relatives in the same 'genealogical tree' of interpretative tradition". Michael A. Williams, "Sethianism", in *A*

Hammadi Codices and the Berlin Gnostic Codex, all three are categorized as "Sethian Gnostic" texts, owing to their focus on the figure of Seth.[483] Both "Gnostic" and "Sethian" are late etic categories that remain troublesome, and before we can proceed with the analysis of the *Melchizedek Tractate*, we will need to discuss how and why we use these terms in the following. The question of defining "Gnostic" is famously difficult, as the term originates from contemporary and later heresiological writings, and the groups in question (as far as we know) never used the term.[484] Although the term "Gnostic" is thus a "heuristic scholarly construct", within the boundaries of this research, it remains a most useful category under which to "group ancient religious texts and thinkers for closer analysis and comparison".[485] We will thus, with due caution, continue to use it as a category.

The same considerations apply to the use of the Gnostic subcategories (such as Sethian, Barbeloite, and Ophite). The use of these categories poses a pressing question for our analysis, because the *Melchizedek Tractate* has, as mentioned, traditionally been designated as Sethian.[486] This category

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Companion to Second-Century Christian "Heretics" (ed. Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 48. Although an interesting hypothesis, a full study of the possible connections, and the consequences of these, is beyond the scope of this study.

[483] Hans-Martin Schenke, "Das sethianische System nach Nag-Hammadi-Handschriften", in *Studia Coptica* (Berliner Byzantinische Arbeiten 45; ed. Peter Nagel; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1974). Other scholars who have supported this categorization include Einar Thomassen, "Notes pour la délimitation d'un corpus valentinien à Nag Hammadi", in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification: Actes du colloque tenu à Québec du 15 au 19 septembre 1993* (Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi, "Études" 3; ed. Louis Painchaud and Anne Pasquier; Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 245, Jean-Pierre Mahé, "La figure de Melchisédek dans le codex IX de Nag Hammadi", *Comptes rendus: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 1 (2000): 265: "On peut donc en déduire que notre texte professe le même mythe de la gnose que les autres écrits séthiens", and Walter Beltz, "Melchisedek: Eine gnostische Initiationsliturgie", *ZRGG* 33 (1981): 156: "Die Schrift gehört zum Typ der sethianischen Gnosis".

[484] Perhaps "the most difficult issue in the study of 'Gnosticism'" as described by Antti Marjanen, "'Gnosticism'", in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (ed. Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 216.

[485] Ibid., 210–211.

[486] The other Sethian texts are the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, the *Apocalypse of Adam*, the *Three Steles of Seth*, *Zostrianos*, *Marsanes*, the *Thought of Norea*, *Allogenes*, and the *Trimorphic Protennoia*; cf. Schenke, "System", 165–173. Other texts have since been suggested, e.g., *The Thunder, Perfect Mind*, and *Hypsiphrone*; cf. John D. Turner, "Typologies of the Sethian Gnostic Treatises from Nag Hammadi", in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification: Actes du colloque tenu à Québec du 15 au 19 septembre 1993* (Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi, "Études" 3; ed. Louis

was initially defined by Schenke, who produced a list of attributes and mythologoumena that marked fourteen of the Gnostic texts as a separate group.[487] These texts were collected under the Sethian title, an umbrella term that suffers from the same problems as the term *Gnostic*. Although Schenke's system has since been revised, including in the recent work done by Rasimus, the differences in the case of the *Melchizedek Tractate* are minor, and we will continue to use the classic designation of *Sethian*.[488]

While Schenke identified the *Melchizedek Tractate* as part of the Sethian text corpus, he also acknowledged that it constitutes something special in this category. He found the *Melchizedek Tractate* text to be an example of a text that is neither entirely Sethian nor entirely Gnostic—rather, the text's primary narrative is dependent on a Jewish "Legendenkranz" that was later inserted into a Sethian framework.[489] Turner, who also categorized the *Melchizedek Tractate* as Sethian, found it to be the text furthest removed from this category, exhibiting merely "a thin Sethian veneer".[490]

Painchaud and Anne Pasquier; Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 172–173. While the texts included in this "Sethian system" exhibit a wide range of internal disagreements, they share "not a system of doctrines, but a sacred story or myth. In the case of a myth, some diversity is to be expected", according to Brakke, *Gnostics*, 41.

[487] The primary identifying traits of this category are, according to Schenke, the idea of the Gnostics being the pneumatic seed of Seth, mentions of the four lights of the Autogenes, a second triad alongside the four luminaries, and an obvious and positive Christianization, cf. Schenke, "System". Turner, "Typologies", 171, provides a concise summary of Schenke's features in thirteen points, adding a fourteenth feature regarding the mention of the baptismal Rite of the Five Seals, which Turner states is "perhaps" present in the *Melchizedek Tractate*.

[488] Tuomas Rasimus, *Paradise Reconsidered in Gnostic Mythmaking: Rethinking Sethianism in Light of the Ophite Evidence* (NHS 68; ed. Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen; Leiden: Brill, 2009). Under the term "Classic Gnostic", Rasimus subdivides Schenke's Sethian texts into the categories of Sethite and Barbeloite, and adds a new group, the Orphite. Rasimus' system provides an excellent overview of how these groups differ from each other, and where they overlap, but he admits that his system remains a "convenient reference tool for a typological constructed category" (ibid., 59). Rasimus also categorizes the *Melchizedek Tractate* as a Sethite text, although he situates it in the very middle between the Sethite and Barbeloite mythology. As Rasimus does not specify why he places the *Melchizedek Tractate* in this section, we must deduce that it is for similar reasons to those listed by Schenke et al.

[489] Hans-Martin Schenke, "Die jüdische Melchisedek-Gestalt als Thema der Gnosis", in *Altes Testament-Frühjudentum-Gnosis* (ed. Karl-Wolfgang Tröger; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1980), 124–133. This is an interpretation later followed by most scholars, cf., e.g., Helderman, "Wirkung", 341.

[490] Turner adds that "The furthest removed from the core interests of the Sethian group is Melchizedek, a decidedly Christian treatise with only a thin Sethian veneer; its affinity to the rest seems to be limited to a baptismal invocation of the names of some of the major *dramatis personæ* found in other treatises", and "Last comes Melchizedek as the treatise most removed from the thematic center of gravity of the entire Sethian group", Turner, "Typologies", 179–180. Turner found the *Melchizedek Tractate* to

In this context, it is interesting that the tractate's lengthiest doctrinal preaching (5.2–11) argues against the docetic stance on Jesus' bodily incarnation, suffering, and death, in what has been described as the "most anti-docetic views found anywhere in Christian literature". [491] This antidocetic statement appears detached from the surrounding narrative, and the majority of the classical Gnostic parts in the text similarly appear as isolated passages, which may mark them as later additions. This is the case with the list of divine beings in 5.24–6.10, where we find the palindrome [ⲁ]ⲃⲁ̣[. . .] ⲁⲓⲁⲓ̣ ⲁⲃⲁⲃⲁ referring to the name of the supreme God (elsewhere entitled ⲁ̅ⲃ̣̅[ⲉ̅ⲗ̅ ⲃ̅ⲟ̅ⲣ̅]ⲟ̣̅ⲩ̅[ⲭ̅] (*Abel Barauch*); 6.14; 16.19), the four lights of the Autogenes (Harmozel, Oroiael, Daveithe, and Eleleth), and the names Barbelo, Doxomedon, and Pigeradamas. Similarly, the single surviving use of the name Seth (in 5.20: *the congregation of* [the children] *of Seth*) appears to be a secondary identification of the congregation, when compared with the term [ϩ̅ⲙ̅ ⲡⲅ]ⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲙ̅ⲡⲁⲣⲭ[ⲓ]ⲉⲣ[ⲉ]ⲩⲥ (*the race of the High Priest*; 6.17), referring to those who belong to Melchizedek (cf. 16.8)—a designation that provides a better fit with the primary Melchizedek-Jesus narrative and with the text's focus on the priestly aspects of this narrative.[492]

The most important remaining Gnostic traits in the text consist of the theogony myth, the rewritten Paradise myth in 8.28–10.28, and an

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exhibit the basic features of a Sethian text, as it stipulates that the Gnostics are the "pneumatic seed of Seth"; it mentions the four lights of the Autogenes; it contains "obvious secondary Christianization"; it includes the "presupposition of a second triad alongside the four luminaries" (in the case of the *Melchizedek Tractate*, this would be the reference to Gamaliel and his angelic "coworkers"), and it includes the classic Sethian names (Barbelo, Doxomedon, the Light Oroiael, the Man of Light Pigeradamas, and Mirocheirothetos; and probably Harmozel, Daveithe, and Eleleth); cf. ibid., 170-171; 179. On the basis of his survey of the Gnostic treatises, Turner constructs a developmental scenario in which the *Melchizedek Tractate* is dependent on the Gospel of the Egyptians (which is in turn dependent upon the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Trimorphic Protennoia*). If this is the case, then the tractate would be among the youngest of the Sethian treatises (ibid., 217).

[491] Cf. Lance Jenott, *The Gospel of Judas: Coptic Text, Translation, and Historical Interpretation of 'the Betrayer's Gospel'* (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 64; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 22. The passage in question (5.2–11) reads: . . . *they will say of him, "He was not born", though he was born; "he does not eat", though he does eat; "he does not drink", though he does drink; "he is not circumcised", though he was circumcised; "he is without real flesh", though he came in the flesh; "he did not suffer death", [though] he did endure suffering; "he did not rise from the dead", [though] he did rise from the dead*. Helderman, "Wirkung", 340, describes this as "Eines der bemerkenswertesten Merkmale der Schrift ist zweifellos die klare anti-doketische Passage". Pearson and Giversen, *Codices*, 34–35, termed it "a rigorously 'orthodox,' or at least anti-docetic, Christology".

[492] Cf. ibid., 20.

additional short passage containing the names of supernatural beings (16.16–18.7). Although the text thus includes most of the "classic Sethian" characteristics, these are limited both in number and in their textual spread. These sections have been suggested (by Schenke, Turner, Pearson, et al.) to be later additions to a text that was originally an early apocalyptic writing focusing on the Melchizedek-Jesus narrative, resulting in a "gnosticized Jewish-Christian apocalypse".[493] That the (later) editors applied this "thin Sethian veneer" to appropriate the original text may have had less to do with the text's original Melchizedek figure than with its mystical liturgical language, involving both initiation and consecration.[494] At least it seems that the Melchizedek figure did not instigate any spurt of creative writing, judging by the surviving Nag Hammadi texts (though as we will see, this had occurred in the later Gnostic texts *Pistis Sophia* and the *2 Book of Jeu*, which reveal the existence of a plethora of Gnostic Melchizedek traditions).

6.1.2 Melchizedek in the *Melchizedek Tractate*

The *Melchizedek Tractate*'s narrative centres on the figure of Melchizedek. This focus is apparent from the title, where the name has been partially preserved (—| ⲙ̅ⲉ̅ⲗ̅ⲭ̅ⲓ̅ⲥ̅[ⲉ̅ⲇ̅ⲉ̅ⲕ̅]), and in the six times the name can be reconstructed in the surviving text.[495] The tractate may be subdivided into three major sections that each describe events in a progressive chronology. In the first section (1.1–14.15), Melchizedek receives his initial revelation, presumably from the angel Gamaliel.[496] The section concludes as

[493] Ibid., 38–39. Cf., Lahe, *Gnosis*, 324. Lahe adds that, if it were the case that Sethianism originated as a Jewish "Taufbewegung", then the *Melchizedek Tractate* would strengthen the connection (although he refrains from delving into the idea, as it would "Rahmen der vorliegenden Studie sprengen", with which I fully agree).

[494] Cf. Beltz, "Melchisedek", 157, who interprets the purpose of the text as "ein gnostiches Initiationsmysterium beschreibt", wherein "Der gnostische Adept übernimmt den heiligen Namen und die heilige Geschichte und wird zum erlösten Erlöser, denn er vermag, nach göttlicher Offenbaung, diese Heilslehre auch weiterzusagen".

[495] The reconstructions of the name have varying degrees of certainty (e.g., in 12.10, only two letters are missing from the name; in 5.15, only a single letter remains); cf. Pearson and Giversen, *Codices*, 19–20, 42. The use of the name in the title may be an indication that Melchizedek was regarded as, or proposed to be, the text's author (as with what may be the case in the texts *Zostrianos* and *Marsanes*).

[496] Although the angel Gabriel would be a plausible suggestion, the name does not fit the lacuna in 5.17. Instead, the angel Gamaliel is, according to ibid., 22–23, "the perfect candidate", as the name fits the gaps and is known from comparable situations in other Gnostic texts; e.g., Gamaliel functions as one of three angels in the *Apocalypse of Adam*,

Melchizedek is warned not to disclose any secrets to the uninitiated. The second section (14.15–18.11) focuses on Melchizedek's ritual actions, including his baptism. In the third section, Melchizedek receives a second revelation before the tractate concludes with a final warning.[497]

The first revelation given to Melchizedek details the ministry, death, and resurrection of a future saviour. The recipient of the revelation is the priest-king described in Gen 14:18–20, to whom we will refer in the following as Past-Melchizedek. The saviour figure is quite clearly identified as Jesus Christ, described as the one who will reveal the truth only to his chosen followers, while speaking in proverbs, parables, and riddles to everyone else (1.19–20; 1.24–2.2), who will be punished on false charges (3.9–11), before *[on] the [third] day he [will rise from the] dead*.

In this first vision, the tractate presents "an anomalous situation [in which] Melchizedek [. . .] is given a prophecy of his own future priestly activity in the time following the death and resurrection of the Savior!"[498] This saviour, whose actions are in the past for the author of the tractate, but in the future for Past-Melchizedek, is described as having *included himself [in the] living [offering] together with your [offspring.] He [offered] them up as a [sacrifice to] [the] All* (6.25–28). The prophecy informs Past-Melchizedek that his sacrifices of material objects have been ineffective: *[For it is not] cattle [that] you will offer up [for sin(s)]* (6.28–29), and worse, they have been offered not to God but to Death, angels, and demons (cf. 16.2–5). In this way, the first vision instructs Past-Melchizedek of the proper sacrificial subject, namely oneself, which is superior to material objects, such as cattle. By combining Gen 14:18–20 with elements from Hebrews, this part of the tractate creates a situation in which Past-Melchizedek, on divine instruction, adjust his priestly practises to the model of the future saviour. Through this complicated exegesis, the author of the *Melchizedek Tractate* has defined the initial connection between Past-Melchizedek and the future saviour. This connection is further developed in the following parts of the text.

In the central, heavily damaged, part of the tractate, we encounter a Melchizedek who is no longer Past-Melchizedek from Genesis, but a Melchizedek described as functioning during, or shortly before, the author's own time period. This Present-Melchizedek receives a baptism of

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the *Trimorphic Protennoia*, and the *Gospel of the Egyptians*. Two other angels (12.1; 19.12) remain unidentified, but the name Akramas may be reconstructed in 17.24. Cf. Turner, "Typologies", 176.

[497] Wolf-Peter Funk, Claudio Gianotto, and Jean-Pierre Mahé, eds., *Melchisédek (NH IX,1). Oblation, baptême et vision dans la gnose séthienne* (Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi, Textes 28; Leuven: Peeters, 2001) suggest a slightly different division into three sections (1.2–14.15; 14.15–19.1; 19.2–27.6) with a brief epilogue.

[498] Pearson and Giversen, *Codices*, 22.

water (8.1–10), following which, as high priest of the sectarian community, he offers intercessional prayers for *the [offspring of the] archons and [all] the angels, together with [the] seed <which> flowed [forth from] [the Father] of the All* (8.28–9.4). According to Pearson, Melchizedek's prayers are here directed towards all humanity as "a composite of archontic and heavenly origins (man's lower nature derives from the archons, and his heavenly Spirit from God)".[499]

This Present-Melchizedek figure receives enlightenment, apparently as a result of his baptism, though it derives from the *Father of the [All]* through the assistance of *the angel of light*, and is granted because the Father *had pity on me* [Melchizedek] (14.28–15.1). The experience serves to bring Present-Melchizedek out of his cultic ignorance, and from the *fructification of death to life* (15.5–7a). The consequences of this understanding are described in a monologue (15.7b–13), which may be considered the turning point of the tractate: *For I have a name; I am Melchizedek, the Priest of [God] Most High; I [know] that it is I who am truly [the image* (ⲧⲓⲓⲛⲉ) *of] the true High-priest of God Most High, and [. . .] the world.*[500] The

[499] Ibid., 24.

[500] It is rather unfortunate that this particular part of the text has been damaged. In the above, we have followed the reconstruction suggested by Pearson and Giversen, *Codices*, 25–26, 68–69. Yet it should be emphasized that alternatives have been suggested, e.g., by Schenke, "Melchisedek-Gestalt, 120, who reconstructs [das Bild], because he rejects the idea of assimilation between Melchizedek and Jesus. He states that the difference originates in the fact that "Pearson denkt im Prinzip literarkritisch, während die hier vertretene Auffassung traditionsgeschichtlich orientiert ist"; Hans-Martin Schenke, "Melchisedek (NHC IX,1)", in *Nag Hammadi Deutsch. 2 Band NHC V2-Xiii1 Bg 1 4* (ed. Hans-Gebhard Bethge, Hans-Martin Schenke, and Ursula U. Kaiser; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003), 681, and: "Für mich war jedenfalls seitdem klar, dass auf p.25 zwei verschiedene "Ichs" reden und deshalb Jesus und Melchizedek von dem Autor *nicht* als identisch verstanden sein können" (author's emphasis). Wolf-Peter Funk, Claudio Gianotto, and Jean-Pierre Mahé, eds., *Melchisédek*, followed Schenke's reconstruction. This results in a narrative wherein the first "I" (that of Jesus Christ) speaks to the archons, and a second "I" (i.e., Melchizedek) who reports after leaving a "visionary trance". Helderman, "Melchisedeks", 342–347, has identified an inconsistency in Pearson's suggestion; according to Pearson's own definition and use of ⲓⲛⲉ, he elsewhere translates this substantive as "form(ally); likeness; aspect; species; appearance" and (only here!) as "Image" (ibid., 342). According to Helderman, Pearson has "zurückprojiziert" this interpretation, due to his wish to link the text with Hebrews. Helderman prefers [*der Name*], stating "Der Gedanke wäre demnach: (Melchisedek spricht): 'Ich habe einen Namen, ich bin Melchisedek usw., ich weiss dass ich in Wahrheit der Name des wahren Hohenpriesters bin'". The reconstruction of Pearson has been followed by Turner, "Typologies", 176, who calls the result an "ultimate assimilation" of the two figures; and by Williams, "Sethianism", 47, who describes the section thus: "the ancient Melchizedek is understood to have been an avatar or image of the 'true High Priest'", i.e., Jesus Christ. In his reply to the criticism raised by Schenke, Birger A. Pearson, "Melchizedek", in *Nag Hammadi* (ed. Marvin W. Meyer; New York:

monologue appears to continue, but unfortunately, the text here becomes too fragmented to be decipherable.

With this monologue, the author presents a remarkable shift in Present-Melchizedek's personality: following the vision received by Past-Melchizedek, this second Present-Melchizedek has now, through his baptism, realized that he is *truly [the image of]* the heavenly Jesus Christ, the true High Priest.[501] This realization also affects Melchizedek's cultic priestly activities, for whereas Past-Melchizedek had offered animal sacrifices to Death, angels, and demons (16.2–5), Present-Melchizedek substitutes these physical sacrifices with a spiritual sacrifice, understood to mean a sacrifice of himself and his followers: *I have offered up myself to you as a sacrifice* (ⲡⲣⲟⲥⲫⲟⲣⲁ)*, together with those that are mine* (16.7–8), similar to the actions of Christ described in 6.25–28. These sacrifices are offered *to you yourself, (O) Father of the All, and those whom you love, who have come forth from you who are holy (and) [living]* (16.9–10). Melchizedek then states that following the *[perfect] laws I shall pronounce my name as I receive baptism* (ⲃⲁⲡⲧⲓⲥⲙⲁ) *[now] (and) forever, (as a name) among the living (and) holy [names], and (now) in the [waters], Amen* (16.10–16).

Melchizedek's enlightenment, associated with the sacrifice of himself in the context of cultic actions (such as the baptism), presents this section as part of a cultic ritual in which the subject offered himself and thereby received enlightenment (and received also, perhaps, the mystical name of

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HarperOne, 2007), 597–598, emphasized that his reconstruction gains support from other passages in the tractate and from the interpretation of Melchizedek as the "true high priest" of the elect community. Pearson's reconstruction gains further credence due to the construction's multiple parallels within the Gnostic corpus. In these, we can detect a marked interest among the Gnostics in texts presenting saviour figures who incarnate as ancient prophets; e.g., in the *Egyptian Gospel* (NHC III,2 63.4–8; 64.1–13), the "Great Savior" thrice incarnates in the cosmos; while in *Zostrianos* (NHC VII,1 6.3–7.22), we are told that the third incarnation was that of Jesus; and in the *Apocryphon of John*, Barbelo descends three times into the world (NHC II,1 30.32–31.17). For a discussion and summary of the existence of such reincarnational Christology in a wide selection of Gnostic literature, see Dylan M. Burns, "Jesus' Reincarnations Revisited in Jewish Christianity, Sethian Gnosticism, and Mani", in *Portraits of Jesus. Studies in Christology* (WUNT 2:321; ed. Susan E. Myers; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 381–388. Because of the above mentioned arguments, and the (albeit later) parallels with such constructions involving Melchizedek and Jesus in *Pistis Sophia* and *2 Book of Jeu*, and also from the later descriptions of the sectarian sects (as we will discuss shortly), we will follow Pearson's reconstruction.

[501] Cf. Turner, "Typologies", 176, Williams, "Sethianism", 47, and Pearson and Giversen, *Codices*, 29–30, who identified a parallel to this example of "overlapping and parallel revelations" in *1 En.* 37–71. There Enoch receives two revelations: the first lets him glimpse the "Son of Man", and in a later revelation, he is told by an angel that he is the "Son of Man".

Melchizedek). The passage may also have served as part of a priestly initiation, strengthened by the tractate's frequent emphasis on Melchizedek being a high priest, and by the subsequent (damaged) section, in which we find a series of invocations following the pattern of *holy are you* tied to a divine name, followed by *forever and ever, Amen*.[502] In addition, a confession is mentioned in 18.6–11, addressed to Jesus Christ, who confers a blessed status on those who *confess him* (ϧⲟⲩⲉⲓ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ).[503]

The last section (19.1–26.7) is even more damaged than the preceding, with the text in 20.24–24 being almost completely indecipherable. It presents an additional revelation received by Present-Melchizedek. Conveyed by three angels it describes what appears to be a battle between a Future-Melchizedek and a number of unnamed adversaries who, following the counsels of Satan, oppose his priesthood, teachings, or actions (20.10–15). This confrontation is apparently set in an undefined future, and is part of an eschatological conflict. When the text once again becomes readable, it does so in the middle of an address from Jesus Christ to his executioners: *And [you crucified me] from the third hour [of the Sabbath-eve] until [the ninth hour]. And after [these things I arose] from the [dead*. (25.4–9).[504] These executioners should probably be understood not as Jewish or Roman officials, but rather as the opposing supernatural figures mentioned earlier in the tractate (such as the archons).[505] This second revelation ends with additional references to *sacrifices* and *fasting* in 27.1–3, before the angelic revealers are *taken up to above the heavens* (27.10).

There are few indications as to what occurs in the missing pages. However, a plausible reconstruction involves Jesus Christ addressing his opponents (25), and Melchizedek subsequently being congratulated for his victory against his enemies by a heavenly congregation (26). This would agree with the hypothesis formulated by Pearson, that "in the revelation which the priest Melchizedek has received, he has seen that he himself will have a redemptive role to play as the suffering, dying, resurrected and triumphant Savior, Jesus Christ!" [506] Thus, the amalgamated Future-Melchizedek-Jesus-Christ figure is the one who addresses the forces

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[502] Cf. Beltz, "Melchisedek", 155–158, and Funk, Gianotto, and Jean-Pierre, *Melchisédek*, 152–154.

[503] Pearson and Giversen, *Codices*, 26, makes the plausible suggestion that this section "bears all the marks of a liturgical prayer", although the idea that it was "intended to be chanted responsively in the context of a worship service" may be stretching the evidence.

[504] According to Schenke, "Melchisedek-Gestalt", 127, these are the words of Melchizedek, rather than of Christ, referring to a vision. This interpretation is followed by Helderman, "Wirkung", 346, and Funk, Gianotto, and Jean-Pierre, *Melchisédek*, 108–109; 159.

[505] Cf. Pearson and Giversen, *Codices*, 27–28.

[506] Ibid., 28.

responsible for the crucifixion in anticipation of the eschatological confrontation in the last part of the *Tractate*, with the crucifixion serving as a precursor of the forthcoming eschatological war.

The second vision also indicates that this saviour will triumph and destroy the archons, allowing the elect to achieve a final salvation (perhaps that which is described as *perfect hope* and *life* in 5.16–17). According to 26.2–9, this victory will be achieved by Melchizedek: *Be [strong, O Melchiz]edek, great [High Priest] of God [Most High, for the] archons who [are] your [enemies] made war against you. You have [gained the victory over them, and] they did not prevail over [you. You have] preserved and [destroyed] your enemies*. This eschatological war, won by the combined Melchizedek-Christ figure, emphasizes the holy warrior-aspect, which is further accentuated by the use of the military title of *Commander-in-chief* in 18.5.[507] This characterization of the defender of the elect against the archons and other supernatural enemies appears to echo the warrior aspect commonly associated with the exalted-angel traditions. In addition to this warlike aspect, Melchizedek's priestly functions are emphasized frequently throughout the tractate; for example, by the title of *the Priest of [God] Most High* (15.9–10; 12.10), and *Holy One*, or *the High Priest* (ⲁⲣⲭⲓⲉⲣⲉⲩⲥ) in 15.12 (and, perhaps, in 5.14; 26.3). In addition, the righteous community "belonging" to Melchizedek is described as the *race of the High Priest* (6.17).

6.1.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in the *Melchizedek Tractate*

In our interpretation of the *Melchizedek Tractate*, we identified three progressive stages in the text.[508] The first stage is the revelation, which informs Past-Melchizedek of the ways of the coming saviour. The second stage is the baptism, which serves to enlighten Present-Melchizedek of his true identity as the saviour. The third stage is the final revelation, in which it is revealed that Future-Melchizedek will triumph in the coming eschatological conflict against the forces of darkness. The figure within the *Melchizedek Tractate* is evidently quite intricate, being composed of three

[507] Cf. Pearson, "Melchizedek", 596–597, and Helderman, "Wirkung", 340.

[508] Even if our interpretation of 16:12–14 should turn out to be faulty, the Melchizedek of the *Melchizedek Tractate* would still exhibit most of the exalted traits. Cf., e.g., Funk, Gianotto, and Jean-Pierre, *Melchisédek*, 6; 15–17, who, although interpreting the passage differently, still characterize Melchizedek as an earthly counterpart to Christ.

forms of Melchizedek in three different epochs, creating past, present, and future Melchizedek*s*.

Behind these developments, we can discern a number of similarities. Central to these is the return of the exalted Melchizedek figure from earlier texts. However, the majority of the similarities lie in the actions and attributes of Melchizedek: in the *Melchizedek Tractate*, he again serves as an exalted High Priest who defends the righteous community in an eschatological conflict.[509] The similarities are striking, although not sufficient to indicate a direct connection to any of the preceding texts. In addition, the exalted Melchizedek figure in this tractate exhibits elements found in most of the contemporary exalted human and angelic traditions, any of which may have caused the parallels.

However, we can identify a direct influence from Hebrews on the *Melchizedek Tractate*. Although we find Melchizedek identified as a High Priest in other texts (such as *2 Enoch*), the presentation of Melchizedek as such is reminiscent of Christ in Heb 5:10 and 6:20. In addition, Hebrews is the only text in which we find a similarly close connection between Melchizedek and Christ. Indeed, the concept of Melchizedek as the true image of Christ is quite close to the exegesis of Heb 7, although taken a significant step further.[510] The close connection with Hebrews could indicate that the *Melchizedek Tractate* was initially written as an exegetical continuation of the Melchizedek exegesis in Hebrews, providing a new answer to the question of the relationship between Melchizedek and Christ. Instead of using Melchizedek as merely a type of the future Christ, in the *Melchizedek Tractate* we find evidence that the priest-king from Salem was believed by some to be identical to Christ. Although the *Melchizedek Tractate* has been categorized as a Sethian text, there are no surviving

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[509] Others have also noted this similarity, cf., e.g., Schenke, "Melchisedek-Gestalt", 11–112; 126–127, who termed this an "Überlieferungsstrom" that was influenced "von einer frühen Form der jüdischen Merkva-Mystik" passed from Genesis, through 11Q13 and Hebrews, to the *Melchizedek Tractate*; cf. Lahe, *Gnosis*, 318. For Colpe, "Überlieferung", 114–115, it was rather the themes of warfare and judgment from Psalm 110 that were transformed by 11Q13 to form the background to Melchizedek's "Archontenkampf", while Pearson and Giversen, *Codices*, 31, rule out any influences from Psalm 110. Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 92, states that, "Gnostic mythology clearly draws on Jewish esoteric traditions like those found in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, although the content has been radically reinterpreted".

[510] Cf. Pearson and Giversen, *Codices*, 32. In addition, see ibid., 35, for an extended list of suggested allusions and influences from Hebrews on the *Melchizedek Tractate*. Helderman, "Wirkung", 346, suggests additional influences from Rom 12:1; 15:16; 1 Peter 2:5; and 2 Clement 3. According to Lahe, *Gnosis*, 319, the author of the *Melchizedek Tractate* must have known Hebrews, yet did not base his figure of Melchizedek entirely upon that work. Cf. Gianotto, *Melchisedek*, 215–216, and Colpe, "Überlieferung", 115–120, who suggests that the entire text of Hebrews may have been used in the original *Tractate*.

discernible Sethian traits in the Melchizedek-Christ narrative. We will thus propose identifying the *Melchizedek Tractate* as an early combination of Hebrews with the exalted Melchizedek traditions constituting what Schenke termed the Jewish "Legendenkranz", later appropriated by Sethian sectarians, producing the current text.

The *Melchizedek Tractate*'s focus on the priestly aspects of Melchizedek indicates a cultic setting connected with baptism or a priestly investiture, and is best interpreted as a liturgical text written for, or adapted to be used by, a sectarian community. This focus is emphasized by the rewriting of the *Vorlage* in which all the elements of the Genesis passage that do not emphasize the priestly aspect of Melchizedek have been removed; thus we find no mention of the bread or wine, of the patriarch Abraham, of the tithe, or of Melchizedek as king of Jerusalem. Instead, like the traditions we found in 11Q13, and *2 Enoch*, this text is entirely focused on exalting the figure of Melchizedek and on recasting his priesthood as being sufficient in bygone, contemporary, and future epochs. The text is thus a prime example of the exalted category of interpretation. In effect, the tractate exalts and establishes Melchizedek as the true saviour figure of the sectarians responsible for the text. The Melchizedek figure is, through his exalted attributes, recast as the true Jesus Christ, whereby the author provided his community with its own, superior, high priest. Through Melchizedek's past, present, and future priesthood, the community had a protector superior to that of the established *Anstalt*—in this case the mainstream Christian Church, and in the process, they usurped and appropriated their saviour figure of Christ.

6.2 *2 Book of Jeu*

6.2.1 Introduction to the *Books of Jeu*

Within the Bruce Codex, we find the Coptic *Books of Jeu*, which date from the beginning of the third century.[511] The two books are believed to

[511] The name of the codex derives from James Bruce, who bought the manuscripts at Medinat Habu, Egypt, in 1769; cf. Violet MacDermot, *The Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex* (NHS 13; Leiden: Brill, 1978), ix–xi. The title was given the text by Carl Schmidt, who in 1892 published his German translation and commentary on the text (*Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache aus dem Codex Brucianus* [TU 8; Leipzig, 1892], revised in Carl Schmidt, *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften, erster Band: Die Pistis Sophia, die Beiden Bücher des Jeû, unbekanntes*

originate from Egypt from a milieu similar to that of the *Melchizedek Tractate* and the later *Pistis Sophia*.[512] The name derives from a mention in *Pistis Sophia* of two *Books of Jeu* allegedly written by Enoch following the dictation of Jesus (2.99) in Paradise before the events of the Flood (3.134).[513] The *Books of Jeu*, in their present state, represent a collection of texts sharing a common theme, but their imperfect compilation has produced several repetitions and a number of inconsistencies.[514]

It is within the second of the books that we find references to the Melchizedek figure, once as ⲍⲟⲣⲟⲕⲟⲑⲟⲣⲁ ⲙⲉⲗ and twice as ⲍⲟⲣⲟⲕⲟⲑⲟⲣⲁ.[515] The name, or title, *Zorokhotora* has consistently been identified by scholars as a reference to Melchizedek.[516] While the full name *Melchizedek* does not appear in the *Books of Jeu*, the abbreviated form, *Zorokhotora Mel*, features in ch. 46, and thus situates the name in connection with the references to Zorokhotora. The identification between Melchizedek and Zorokhotor Mel is strengthened, as we will see, by the title that appears in connection with the full name in parallel passages in *Pistis Sophia*. The nature, function, and meaning of the magical name Zorokhotora is not explained in either of the texts, and remains unknown, although it appears to have been used primarily in the context of prayers.

6.2.2 Melchizedek in *2 Book of Jeu*

Melchizedek first appears in chs. 45–46, in which Jesus is instructing his disciples in the mysteries of the *Treasury of Light*, or the *Pleroma*. These secret teachings allow the soul to be cleansed of sin after death (42) and to travel through all the places of the invisible God, to the place of Jeu. Among the mysteries are teachings concerning the three baptisms: that of water (45), that of fire (46), and that of the Holy Spirit (47). The successful completion of these allows the initiate to call himself a *Son of the Pleroma* (44).

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altgnostiches Werk [Berlin: J. C. Hinrichs, 1905]). According to Schmidt (ibid., xxxii), the texts date from the beginning of the 3rd century.

[512] Cf. Schmidt, *Schriften*, xxxii, and Violet MacDermot, *Pistis Sophia* (NHS 9; ed. Carl Schmidt; Leiden: Brill, 1978), xii.

[513] At the end of *1 Book of Jeu* (following ch. 41), there is a preserved title, which states that this is *The Book of the Great Logos Corresponding to Mysteries*. This may present a more original and descriptive title by which to refer to the two books.

[514] Cf. MacDermot, *Jeu*, xiii.

[515] Coptic text and translations from ibid.

[516] Cf., e.g., ibid., 110.

In ch. 45, Jesus describes the baptism of water, and gives his disciples an offering of wine and bread. Afterwards, Jesus prays to his father, asking him to summon the fifteen helpers who serve the seven *virgins of the light* to assist in baptizing the disciples. Jesus then proceeds with an invocation to a being named Zorokothora: *And may Zorokothora come forth and bring forth the water of the baptism of life in one of these pitchers of wine*. This water is transformed into wine, allowing Jesus to baptize his disciples, who are then given part of the offering (presumably of the wine). The entire experience makes the disciples *rejoice with a very great joy*, as they realize that their sins have now been forgiven and that they are *numbered among the inheritance of the Kingdom of the Light*.

In ch. 46, Jesus continues the mysteries and asks for variety of items (including vine branches and myrrh), and sets out a cup of wine and a loaf of bread on cloths of linen for each disciple. The disciples undergo numerous preparations, including being clad in white linen and crowned with the verbena plant. They each take an anemone plant in their mouth, and Jesus causes *the cipher of the seven voices, which is 9879, to be placed in their two hands*. Jesus afterwards invokes the four corners of the world, praying to his father to remove the sins of the disciples. Jesus then asks his father to *purify them all and cause Zorokothora Mel to come in secret and bring the water of the baptism of fire of the Virgin of the Light, the judge*. This is repeated a few verses later, as *do thou cause Zorokothora to come and bring the water of the baptism of fire of the Virgin of the Light, that I may baptize my disciples in it*.

The text then changes slightly, with Jesus asking the Virgin of the Light to come and baptize the disciples, and to forgive the sins they have committed. With this change in focus from Melchizedek to the Virgin of Light (and with the successful baptism in fire of the disciples), there are no further references to Melchizedek in the *Books of Jeu*.

6.2.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in *2 Book of Jeu*

In *2 Jeu*, we find a text in which an exalted Melchizedek has become part of a Gnostic hierarchy. With no introduction, Melchizedek is twice summoned by Jesus to assist in the baptism of the disciples. In the first instance, Melchizedek brings the Water of the Baptism of Life, and in the second, the Water of the Baptism of Fire of the Virgin of Light. The last passage is associated with the Virgin of Light, a connection that we will also encounter in *Pistis Sophia*. These two baptisms, as well as the fact that the last is said to belong to the Virgin, may constitute evidence of more

than one Melchizedek tradition combined in *2 Jeu*, due to which a confusion arise with Melchizedek and the Virgin, as both beings are associated with the Light and baptisms.

While *2 Jeu* clearly presents a rewriting positioned in the interpretative category of exalted Melchizedek figures, the text has preserved little material from any of the previous texts, apart from the figure's name. The only discernible connection is to the *Melchizedek Tractate*, and even then, there are only minor similarities. However, it is striking that in both passages in which the figure appears we find a mention of wine and bread (45 & 46). This could be connected to either Gen 14 or to the interpretation of this offering as a prefigurement of the Eucharist in *Stromata* 4.161 and *Ad Quirinum* 63.4.

As in the *Melchizedek Tractate*, Melchizedek appears closely connected with initiation-baptisms through which the chosen are saved from their sins. However, in *2 Jeu*, Melchizedek is not cast as the protagonist, but instead functions as a heavenly being sent by the Father to assist Jesus. There are no indications of an amalgamation of the two, similar to what occurred in the *Melchizedek Tractate*. Melchizedek is a being sent by Jesus' father to assist in the two baptisms of Life and of Fire, both of which entail the forgiveness of sins and offer access to the Kingdom of the Light, the Pleroma. Melchizedek is thus cast as an exalted psychopomp, closely connected to the Pleroma and the task of purifying and liberating the souls of the righteous.

6.3 *Pistis Sophia*

6.3.1 Introduction to *Pistis Sophia*

In the Askew Codex, we find *Pistis Sophia*, so called because the second book has a preserved title stating that it is the *Second Book of the Pistis Sophia*, which although a later addition, has given the work its name.[517]

[517] The title was given by C. G. Woide, who prepared the first copy of the manuscript (procured by A. Askew from a bookseller in London in 1772, and later bought by the British Museum). For an introduction to the text and its history, see Carl Schmidt, *Pistis Sophia* (Coptica: Consilio et impensis instituti Rask-Oerstediani; Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel-Nordisk Forlag, 1925), ix–xci, and MacDermot, *Pistis Sophia*, xi–xviii. Schmidt, *Schriften*, xxiii, suggests that the text may have been written in Egypt, mainly on the basis of its use of the Egyptian calendar and its references to a number of Egyptian deities.

The four books of *Pistis Sophia* detail the postresurrection teachings of Jesus to his disciples during the eleven years that, according to the text, he spent with them. During these years, he taught them *only as far as the places of the first ordinance and as far as the places of the First Mystery which is within the veil which is within the first ordinance, which is the twenty-fourth mystery outside and below* (1.1).[518]

The present text, like the *Books of Jeu*, portrays numerous inconsistencies between its various parts, and appears to be a composition of individual texts compiled because of their common theme. Based on the content and order of the inconsistencies, Schmidt has suggested that the fourth book of *Pistis Sophia* constitutes the oldest part of the work, with a plausible date of ca. the first half of the third century; books 1–3 are then younger, and may date from the end of the third century.[519]

6.3.2 Melchizedek in *Pistis Sophia*

Pistis Sophia refers to Melchizedek a number of times, and in three different ways: in books 1–3, the name Melchizedek (ⲙⲉⲗⲭⲓⲥⲉⲇⲉⲕ) appears a total of 14 times (three times in 1.25; twice in 1.26, 2.86, 3.112, 128, and 131; and once in 3.129), while book 4 refers once to a ⲍⲟⲣⲟⲕⲟⲑⲟⲣⲁ (4.136, identical in name to the being referred to in the *Books of Jeu*), and four times to ⲍⲟⲣⲟⲕⲟⲑⲟⲣⲁ ⲙⲉⲗⲭⲓⲥⲉⲇⲉⲕ (three times in 4.139 and once in 4.140).

According to Schmidt's dating of the text, the earliest of the Melchizedek sections is 4.136–140. At the beginning of this, the name appears in a prayer that Jesus offers to his father: *Hear me, my Father, thou father of all fatherhoods, thou infinite Light*. Jesus proceeds to list a number of descriptive appellations of his father (such as ⲓⲁⲱ, which is explained to the disciples as *iota, because the All came forth; alpha, because it will return again; omega, because the completion of all completions will happen*), and then names a number of what are presumably heavenly beings. These all appear to be closely associated with the Father, having important offices in regard to the Light of the Father.[520]

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[518] Coptic text and translation from MacDermot, *Pistis Sophia*.

[519] Carl Schmidt, *Schriften*, xxxii; cf. MacDermot, *Pistis Sophia*, xiv.

[520] Schmidt, *Schriften*, 373n.2, suggests that all the names in this list refer to the First Mystery, though this seems less plausible than the above interpretation. At least Zorokhotora, Jeu, and Sabaoth are mentioned as beings who had important functions in regards to the Light of the Father; cf. Horton, *Melchizedek*, 144–145.

Among this list is the first mention of ⲍⲟⲣⲟⲕⲟⲑⲟⲣϧ in *Pistis Sophia*, the meaning of which is unfortunately not among those names explained by Jesus.

Later in the text, Jesus informs his disciples how the souls of men are stolen by a multitude of demons who serve an archon called Paraplex (4.139). Asked by Mariam (Mary) as to how this happens, Jesus explains that Jeu *is the provider of all the archons and the gods and the powers which have come into existence in the matter of the light of the Treasury, and Zorokhotora Melchizedek is the messenger of all the lights, which are purified in the archons, as he takes them into the Treasury of the Light, then these two alone are the great lights*. This psychopompous journey, in which Melchizedek leads the lights or souls into safety allows the souls to be freed from *oppression and affliction*. This apparently happens in a cyclical pattern, whenever the time is right (at *the time of the cipher*).[521] At this time, Melchizedek guides the souls *to the gate of those of the Midst, and takes them to the Treasury of the Light*.

With time, Jesus informs his disciples, Jeu withdraws, and Melchizedek becomes occupied with transportation of souls. This allows the archons to rebel again. They steal the souls and bring them to Paraplex, who proceeds to punish them for 133 years and 9 months, until the pattern repeats itself and the souls are liberated and guided to safety by Melchizedek. In ch. 140, a similar cycle is described for the souls who have fallen under the second-ranking archon, called Ariuth, the Ethiopian Woman, and for those under the third-ranking archon, Hekate, the Three-faced. These are parallel stories, but with variations in the pattern—for example, in Hekate's palace, the souls are punished for 105 years and 6 months. A more important variation is that Zorokothora Melchizedek assumes the functions that Jeu had in the cycle involving Paraplex: He *looks forth from the height* and destroys Hekate's places, liberating the souls.[522] Following his accomplishments against Paraplex and Hekate, Melchizedek is not mentioned again in book four.

In the younger passages of *Pistis Sophia*, books 1–3, Melchizedek has different yet similar functions. In his initial appearance (1.25–26), Melchizedek defeats several archons, allowing him to purify and transport the liberated souls to safety in the Treasury of the Light. This transpires when *the time came of the number of Melchizedek*. The *great Paralemptor of Light*, Melchizedek, removes the light from the archons and from *those*

[521] This indication of time appears to be an astrological term, as suggested by Gianotto, *Melchisedek*, 225, and Helderman, "Wirkung", 347–348.

[522] A similar story is afterwards retold concerning the fourth and fifth ranks, in which the archon Typhon is defeated by Zarazaz, and Jachthanabas by Jao.

of the sphere.[523] After purifying the souls, Melchizedek brings them to the Treasury of Light. During the purification process, matter is left behind, which is gathered by the archons, who use it to produce *new souls of men and cattle and reptiles and beats and birds* and send them into the world. This creation of new souls is observed by the *paralemptors of the sun and the moon*. They remove the *lightpower* (presumably to be understood as the new souls) from the archons, and return this to Melchizedek. After this, the process is repeated with the archons creating yet new souls from the material dregs, and casting them out into the *world of mankind*—forcing Melchizedek to once again gather the souls.

Following these events, a shift occurs in the text. In 1.27, the archons swallow the matter (the lightpower?), rather than releasing the souls. This causes the archons to retain their strength, which effects a delay of *two cycles* before the souls are again released. This time, instead of Melchizedek saving the souls, the archons are defeated by Jesus and his *great light*. The actions of Jesus in ch. 27, defeating the archons and liberating the souls, are essentially parallel to those of Melchizedek in the previous chapters (25–26).

In 2.86, a highly convoluted passage, Melchizedek again appears in *Pistis Sophia*. In this passage, he is termed *the great paralemptor of the Light*, and seems to be closely associated with Jeu and Sabaoth. Jesus informs his disciples that Jeu *came forth first from the pure light of the first tree*, while the *watcher of the veil of those of the right* came from the second, *the two leaders* from the third and fourth trees, and Melchizedek from the fifth tree. These five beings (including Sabaoth, though he is also said to have emanated from Jeu directly) were, *at the command of the First Mystery*. They were, by *the last helper*, put *in the place of those of the right for the organization of the gathering together of the light of the height, from the aeons of the archons and from the world and all the races in them*.

Placed high above all other beings, these six were apparently tasked with collecting the souls wherever they might be, serving as *fellow-rulers with the first [saviour] of the first voice of the Treasury of the Light*. It is difficult to discern the precise rank of Melchizedek within this detailed and mysterious Gnostic hierarchy—one that is repeated several times with slight variations, and which also includes the *three amens*, the *twelve saviours*, and numerous *watchers*. Melchizedek's close associations with both Jeu and Sabaoth, and his emanation from the fifth tree, position him above the other heavenly beings, being thus ranked just below the four that emanated from the first four trees, namely Jeu, the watcher, and the two leaders.

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[523] Apparently, the light is what gives the archons their power, as by removing the light *he took away their power which was in them, and the breath of their mouths, and the tears of their eyes, and the sweat of their bodies*

In 3.112, Jesus describes the passage of the soul. He informs his disciples that after the Virgin of the Light and her seven virgins have inspected and sealed the soul, it proceeds to pass through the hands of the Great Sabaoth, who likewise seals the soul. Finally, *Melchizedek, the great paralemptes of the light, who is in the place of those of the right, seals the soul*. Then the so-called *paralemptores* of Melchizedek seal the souls and bring them to the Treasury of Light.[524] In a long procession, the souls pass several powerful beings who scrutinize each one before allowing it to proceed. In this process, Melchizedek and his servants perform the final inspection at the last stage before the soul is allowed to enter the Pleroma. In 3.128–129, a parallel sequence to this is related, but here in an inverted order. This time, Melchizedek's *paralemptes* are said to *speedily snatch* [the soul] *up, whether the dragon has released it, or whether it is in the judgments of the archons*. Having saved the soul from its punishment, Melchizedek's servants then bring the soul to Virgin of the Light who seals it, and her servants place it in the Pleroma.

In a later passage (3.131), the text contains a description of what transpires when the souls, with time, again descend from the Pleroma; *the five archons of the great Heimarmene* give the soul a *cup of forgetfulness*. Drinking this causes the soul to forget all the places it has previously visited. The cup transforms into the body that surrounds the soul as a spirit counterpart. Should the soul be new, it either comes from the sweat, tears, or breath of the archons, in which case the archons knead it together, or else, *if it is dregs of what is purified of the light*, it is forcefully taken from the archons by Melchizedek. In this convoluted and difficult passage, Jesus discloses to his disciples that new souls are made of the fluids of the archons, by the archons, if the soul is far (or destined to be far) from reaching the Treasury of the Light. Should the soul be close to (or destined to be) the light, it is pulled from the archons by Melchizedek.

6.3.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in *Pistis Sophia*

The four books of *Pistis Sophia* present numerous references to an exalted Melchizedek, inserted in a Gnostic hierarchy. Throughout the text, Melchizedek's primary function is to secure the souls of men from the clutches of the archons and to guide their ascent to the Treasury of Light, or

[524] Horton, *Melchizedek*, 140, considers *Pistis Sophia* to be a cohesive text and thus interprets the involvement of Melchizedek's servants to reveal that he "seems to stand apart and delegate the role of descending into the aeons to his Receivers" and "Melchizedek no longer descends into the universe".

Pleroma. However, *Pistis Sophia* also presents evidence of being a compilation of several Melchizedek traditions. While all of the individual traditions cast the figure as an exalted heavenly being, they show some variations in the functions, title, and hierarchic rank accorded Melchizedek.

The earliest of the Melchizedek traditions in *Pistis Sophia* are those we find in book four, which presents three traditions. The first is the use of the title Zorokhotora, without the name Melchizedek, in Jesus' prayer to his father (4.136). In this passage, the title refers to an important being ranked high among those beings associated in various ways with the Father's light. The following, more detailed tradition appears in two variants, both of which have Zorokhotora Melchizedek responsible for bringing all souls to the Pleroma. In the first variant (139), Melchizedek assists Jeu in defeating and liberating the souls from Paraplex. In the second variation (140), we find a Melchizedek who is the only active saviour of the souls. He combats Hekate, destroys her palace, and sets free the souls. Apart from minor discrepancies (such as the time the souls spend in captivity), the two variants in 4.139–140 present a comparable figure of cyclic activities that ensure the liberation of the souls from the archons. Yet while in the first variant, Melchizedek is a power comparable to Jeu (the two are described as the only *great lights*), in the second there is no mention of Jeu, and Melchizedek has absorbed that power's functions.

This image changes somewhat in the younger traditions of books 1–3, in which Melchizedek also combats the archons, liberating, purifying, and transporting the souls to the Pleroma. However, we can find evidence of four additional Melchizedek traditions: one with three variants in books 1, one in book 2, and two in books 3. In the first variant of the tradition in book one (1.25–26), Melchizedek is again the primary saviour of the souls in a cyclic pattern. Apart from the change in title from Zorokhotora to the *great paralemptor of Light*, the content of this variant is closely parallel to the one in 4.139–140. In a variant of 1.25–26, we encounter a tradition in which the archons are responsible for producing new souls. The paralemptors of the sun and the moon see this occurrence (26), and it is now these paralemptors who combat the archons, while Melchizedek is responsible only for the souls return to safety. These events are followed by a different tradition, in which it is now Jesus, rather than Melchizedek, who defeats the archons (27). This distinct break in the cyclic pattern of the previous traditions signifies that we are now dealing with a different tradition, in which Jesus fulfils the functions previously carried out by Melchizedek.

In book 2.86, the text focuses on describing a Gnostic hierarchy and Melchizedek's high position within it. Due to the many variations within the passage, it appears to be a compilation of different hierarchies, with

Melchizedek ranked high in all, but below Jeu, Sabaoth, and other better-known Gnostic characters.

In book 3, we find the last two traditions. The first of these has Melchizedek taking part in the purification process before the souls are allowed to enter the Pleroma. *Pistis Sophia* has preserved two variations of this account: in 3.112, Melchizedek, assisted by his paralemptors, is the final stage in the purification process, and it is Melchizedek who seals the souls before they enter the Pleroma. In the second version (3.128–129), it is Melchizedek's paralemptors who effect the liberation of the souls from the Dragon, and the Virgin of Light now replaced Melchizedek as the final stage before the souls are enter the Pleroma. The final tradition appears in 3.131, in which the archons are again the creators of the souls, and Melchizedek is once more the one who liberates the souls. However, in this tradition, Melchizedek does not defeat the archons as before, but simply removes the souls from the archons with little evidence of any combat.

Pistis Sophia, in its compilation of numerous sources, thus appears to have preserved six exalted Melchizedek traditions and several variants. Two traditions, 4.136 and 2.86, situate Melchizedek within Gnostic hierarchies. In the rest, Melchizedek functions as the liberator of souls and their guide to the Pleroma. Two of these traditions (2.112 with a variant in 128–129, and 3.131), are primarily concerned with Melchizedek's psychopompic functions, and the last two traditions (the two variants in 4.139–140 and 1.25–26, with the variants in 26 and 27) focus on Melchizedek's combat with the archons as a means of liberating souls. While in each tradition Melchizedek has an important role, his importance varies. He is the most important being in 4.140, but a minor participant in the process in 2.128–129. In two cases, the paralemptors (in 1.26 of the sun and moon, and in 2.128–129 of Melchizedek) have become the primary actors, and in 1.27 all Melchizedek's functions have been absorbed by Jesus, rather like how Melchizedek absorbed the functions of Jeu in 4.140.

The highest importance ascribed to Melchizedek is in book four, where he has a status comparable to Jeu (139) or higher (140); in 2.86, however, he is ranked below Jeu, while in 2.112; 128–129 he appears to be low in the hierarchy. The importance ascribed to Melchizedek in these traditions also varies significantly: in 2.112, he is ranked above the Virgin of Light, while in 2.128–129 the Virgin is above him. At the same time, the mysterious servants of Melchizedek also appear to vary in importance. While not mentioned in most traditions, the paralemptors (of the sun and moon) are in 1:26 are responsible for defeating the archons, while in 1.128–129, the paralemptors of Melchizedek have assumed the responsibilities of purification.

In addition to the varying descriptions of Melchizedek, there is further evidence to support that *Pistis Sophia* preserves several independent

Melchizedek traditions. Apart from the differences in terminology and the description of the archons, the souls, and the purification process, we can see that in book four, Melchizedek is entitled *Zorokhotora* and the *Great Light*, whereas in the other books he is called the (*great*) *Paralemptor of the Light*.[525]

According to Schmidt's suggested dating of the individual books, this would make *Zorokhotora Melchizedek* the oldest designation, agreeing with the name's appearance in *2 Jeu*. Thus, the Melchizedek traditions in book four are the oldest, and it seems likely that the remaining traditions are younger than 4.136 and 139–140. It appears conceivable that the variant in which Melchizedek's servants have assumed his functions (with the paralemptors in 1.128–129 later explained as the servants of Melchizedek, rather than of the sun and moon (1.26)) and the variant in which Jesus has similarly absorbed Melchizedek's role, would constitute the youngest variants.

The plethora of similar, yet different, traditions in *Pistis Sophia* thus reveals the continued sectarian interest in an exalted Melchizedek. The text also presents an archetypical example of the category of interpretation of exalted Melchizedeks—one in which all traces of the Melchizedek of Scripture have been removed, and he has become a completely exalted heavenly power.[526] The traditions in *Pistis Sophia* are only loosely connected to *2 Jeu*, with the principle similarities being the appearance of the name *Zorokhotora* in the prayers offered by Jesus to his father, the mention of the Virgin of the Light and her servants, and Melchizedek's general function as a liberator of the souls. Yet there are more differences than similarities, and although the *Melchizedek Tractate*, *2 Jeu*, and *Pistis Sophia*, all derive from a Gnostic environment, the Melchizedek figures they present seldom overlap, and are often alike in name only. This

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[525] The inconsistencies in the name, function, and rank of Melchizedek correspond well to the anomalies regarding the names and titles used of Jesus, as identified by MacDermot, *Pistis Sophia*, xiv, and also apparent from the varying names used to describe Mary in *Pistis Sophia*.

[526] David M. Hay, "Review of 'The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century A.D. and in the Epistle to the Hebrews' by Fred L. Horton Jr.", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 48, no. 4 (1980): 141, has suggested that the description of Melchizedek as one at "the place of the right hand" may be an allusion to Ps 110:1. Hay does not indicate where he found this passage, but presumably he is referring to 2.86. If so, this passage is unclear as to who and what is meant by the description, and we find a similar designation used about a variety of other heavenly beings in *Pistis Sophia*. Birger A. Pearson, "The Figure of Melchizedek in Gnostic Literature", in *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity* (SAC; Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1990), 122–123, finds that *Pistis Sophia*'s "treatment of Melchizedek can easily be seen as a Gnostic reinterpretation of that found in 11QMelch".

suggests that, during the centuries in which these texts were written, there was a significant amount of exegesis performed casting Melchizedek as the central actor. This development becomes even more pronounced, as we shortly turn to more traditional Christian authors and their accounts of various "Melchizedek heresies". Combined with the *Melchizedek Tractate* and the multiple traditions in *2 Jeu* and *Pistis Sophia*, the heresiologies of these authors emphasize the manifold traditions of exalted Melchizedeks in circulation.

6.3.4 Excursus on Bala'izah Fragment 52

Fragment 52 of the Bala'izah fragments appear to contain yet another example of a Gnostic Melchizedek. This fragment contains the remains of an erotapokriseis between John and, presumably, Jesus.[527] The text was discovered among the fragments of some 3,000 texts found in Upper Egypt in Deir el Bala'izah by W. M. Flinders Petrie in 1907, was initially published by W. E. Crum in 1943, and was reedited by P. E. Kahle, Jr. (who was able to add several lines to the text published by Crum).[528] The three small papyrus fragments are "sahidisch verfaßt, mit einigen archaischen Formen", and have been dated by Kahle to the fourth century and by Crum to the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth.[529] The date of the original Greek text is unknown.

This Gnostic text[530] is often mentioned in connection with the Melchizedek figure,[531] as it contains a section that quotes Heb 7:3: . . .]

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[527] Described as a "Fragmente eines Gespräche des Johannes mit Jesus" by Henri C. Puech, "Andere gnostische Evangelien und verwandte Literatur. E: Fragmente eines Gespräche des Johannes mit Jesus", in *neutestamentliche Apokryphen in Deutscher Übersetzung. I Band Evangelien*, 5 ed. (ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1987), 310.

[528] A description of the finds and their content is given in Paul E. Kahle, *Bala'izah: Coptic Texts from Deir El-Bala'izah in Upper Egypt. Volume 1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), 1–45; Puech, "Fragmente", 310; and Lahe, *Gnosis*, 316. Walter E. Crum, "Coptic Anecdota", *JTS* 44 (1943): 176–182. Kahle, *Bala'izah*.

[529] Puech, "Fragmente", 310. Cf. Crum, "Anecdota", and Kahle, *Bala'izah*, 269.

[530] A designation suggested by Kahle, *Bala'izah*, 474, who regarded the fragment as a clearly Gnostic text—even refraining from commenting upon it, as he believed a more complete version would certainly be found at Nag Hammadi.

[531] Cf. Horton, *Melchizedek*, 131–135. Horton (ibid., 134) notes that the reference to Melchizedek "directly after Noah" in the text indicates that the author was familiar with the rabbinic identification of these two figures. This suggestion is repeated by Pearson, "Gnostic Literature", 110. Although this may well be the case, we should not discount

Now [I desire] further to [ask Thee that Thou wouldst] explain [unto me] concerning Melchizedek. Is it not said [concerning him]: being without [father, being without] mother, his generation [was not mentioned], having no beginning [of days], having no end of life, [being] like to the Son of God, being a priest forever. It is also said concerning him: . . . [(52.83–89).[532]

Unfortunately, the surviving passages of the Bala'izah fragment reveal nothing about what is said of Melchizedek, and the answers given by Jesus (if it is Jesus) have been lost in a lacuna. As a result, the fragment cannot be said to present an exalted Melchizedek.[533] Fragment 52 may only serve to further the case that there were in existence multiple Gnostic traditions concerning the figure, and that Melchizedek was the subject of discussion within a, presumably, Gnostic erotapokriseis.

6.4 Hippolytus

6.4.1 Introduction to Hippolytus

The Roman presbyter Hippolytus' (ca. 170–235) work, the *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, portrays a wealth of heresies.[534] The purpose of the author in writing his heresiology was, primarily, to provide theological material that the Church could use to defend itself from past and present

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the possibility of the author being familiar with the traditions of *2 Enoch*, a text that also situated Melchizedek in the times of Noah.

[532] Coptic text and English translation from Kahle, *Bala'izah*. Crum, "Anecdota", 178, provides the following translation: "[But I desire further to ask Thee that Thou wouldst] explain [unto me] concerning Me[lchizedek.] Is it not said [concerning him] that [he was] a [fatherless . . .] mother[less . . .] end of [life . . . a] priest for ever. It was said [also] of him that . . ."

[533] In Bala'izah manuscript 17 (nine pages, dating to ca. the early part of the 5th century), excerpts of Hebrews (6:17–7:9 and 9:19–10:1) are included among passages from the Pauline epistles; cf. Kahle, *Bala'izah*, 350–366. As these quotations all follow the text of Hebrews closely, the name of Melchizedek appears frequently. An interesting aspect of this fragment (even "remarkable", according to Kahle; ibid.), is how several names of heavenly beings are often overlined in red. The name of Melchizedek is, however, nowhere overlined in red, which may be an indication that no exalted features were ascribed to Melchizedek in the Bala'izah corpus.

[534] Cf. Everett Ferguson, "Hippolytus", in *EEC* (ed. Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris; New York: Garland, 1998), 531.

attacks.[535] While Hippolytus evidently knew of the existence of Gnostic sects, he describes how, in an earlier version, he preferred not to disclose their secret teachings (*Proem* 1). This decision changed following his "great discovery" (apparently he was given access to several manuscripts containing material from, or about, at least eight Gnostic schools), following which he decided to reveal their teachings (*Proem* 2).[536] Among the many sects described in the *Refutatio,* there is one that, according to Hippolytus, held Melchizedek in great esteem (7.36.1; 10.24.1).

6.4.2 Melchizedek in *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*

Hippolytus tells that the Theodotians were led by Theodotus the Leatherworker from Byzantium. They confessed a strong adoptionism, in which Jesus at his baptism had Christ descend upon him as a reward for his virtuous life (7.35).[537] The Theodotians, for reasons not disclosed by Hippolytus, *separated themselves from the school of the Gnostics, Cerinthus, and Ebion* (τῶν γνωστικῶν καὶ Κηρίνθου καὶ Ἐβιωνος) (7.35.1), only to themselves become divided.[538] One splinter sect was led by a different Theodotus, known as the Banker. This group never receives any specific name by Hippolytus, and while we will use the term *Melchizedekians* to describe this particular group, it should be noted that this title does not appear in the texts until it is used by Epiphanius (*Pan.* 75) to describe a similar (or identical) group.[539]

The description in 7.35.1 of the Melchizedekians deriving from the school of Ebion, through the Theodotians, is noteworthy. If this

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[535] Cf. Miroslav Marcovich, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* (PTS 25; Berlin: W. De Gruyter, 1986), 40–41. Hippolytus is on the receiving end of many harsh words from modern scholars; ibid., 41 finds the text to reveal Hippolytus as a "*lonely schismatic bishop crying out for recognition*" (author's emphasis) and rather "self-obsessed" (ibid., 41); a different example is Ferguson, "Hippolytus", 531, who states "Hippolytus resembled Irenaeus in theology, Origin in scholarship, and Tertullian in attitudes, but was inferior to all three in originality and achievement".

[536] Cf. Marcovich, *Refutatio*, 32–33.

[537] Cf. Rebecca Lyman, "Theodotus the Leatherworker", in *EEC* (ed. Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris; New York: Garland, 1998), 1121.

[538] Greek text from Marcovich, *Refutatio*.

[539] Cf. Frederick W. Norris, "Melchizedek, Melchizedekians", in *EEC* (ed. Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris; New York: Garland, 1998), 744. Given its relatively late appearance, this designation was probably not used by any sect. However, as it describes what appears to have been the central belief of the sect, we will use it in the following where applicable.

information is correct, and we only have Hippolytus' brief remark on this subject, we may have found a possible origin of the Melchizedekians' belief in an exalted Melchizedek. The only example of a group calling itself Ebionites is found in a commentary to Psalm 37 found at Qumran (4QPs37).[540] If Hippolytus' information is to be believed, the Ebionites may have carried parts of the tradition of an exalted Melchizedek, similar to the one found in *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and 11Q13, with them into the Christian sectarian ideology.

The Melchizedekians appear to have continued the Theodotian theology of adoptionism (7.24; 10.20),[541] but the belief that separated this group from its parent sect was their belief in Melchizedek as a *power* (δύναμις). This power, who Christ was formed as a likeness of, was greater than Christ (λέγειν δύναμίν τινα τὸν Μελχισεδὲκ εἶναι με(γ)ίστην, καὶ τοῦτον εἶναι μείζονα τοῦ Χριστοῦ) (7.36.1).

According to the sparse information provided by Hippolytus on the beliefs of this sect, Melchizedek is the highest power. The figure ranks above Christ, who, in an inversion of Hebrews, was believed to be a mere likeness of Melchizedek.[542]

6.4.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in *Refutatio omnium haeresium*

The sparse information that Hippolytus dispenses in his *Refutatio omnium haeresium* about this unnamed sect following Theodotus constitutes the first mention by a Christian author of sects ascribing an exalted status to Melchizedek. Hippolytus thus provides valuable information on the existence of at least one sect whose members believed in an exalted Melchizedek, yet who still believed Christ to be an important figure. In an

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[540] Cf. Sakari Häkkinen, "Ebionites", in *A Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics'* (ed. Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 247; Frederick S. Jones, "Ebionites", in *EEC* (ed. Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris; New York: Garland, 1998), 357-358.

[541] Cf. Horton, *Melchizedek*, 90–91; Frederick W. Norris, "Theodotus the Banker", in *EEC* (ed. Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris; New York: Garland, 1998), 1121.

[542] Gianotto, *Melchisedek*, 160–162, brings to our attention a later Arabic commentary attributed, apparently falsely, to Hippolytus. In the text, on a Friday the 13th of Nisan, Melchizedek circumcised Abraham with a *well-sharpened knife*. To this the author adds that as *Melchizedek circumcised Abraham, thus John baptized Christ*.

inversion of the interpretation found in Hebrews, they regarded Christ as the lesser being, compared to the *power* that is Melchizedek. The sect with these beliefs remains unnamed, and the size of the community and its geographic location is not mentioned by Hippolytus.

What Hippolytus does present us with is information about a sect that had been associated with other sects, and which, presumably through a radical interpretation of Hebrews, had come to the belief that it is Melchizedek who is the great power, while Christ is only formed in his likeness. Hippolytus' information may be regarded as reliable, considering the plethora of comparable exalted Melchizedek figures we have found in the *Melchizedek Tractate*, *2 Jeu*, and *Pistis Sophia*, and with the possible inclusion of *Songs of Sabbath Sacrifice* and 11Q13 considering the sect is mentioned as being connected with the Ebionites. Although Hippolytus' own beliefs may have skewed his treatment of the sect, the description appears plausible.[543]

The additional information dispensed by later Christian authors, both regarding the Melchizedekians and related sects, may also at first appear incredible. However, in addition to the arguments stated above, we should note that although these authors may have found the sects they described vile and heretic, they generally have few reservations in admitting when they have little or no information regarding a sect (see, for example, Epiphanius in his *Pan*. 61.1.2–2.4). As the sectarian beliefs presented by these Christian heresiologists correspond to ideas we have previously seen in both earlier and contemporary traditions, it appears plausible that Hippolytus' *Refutatio omnium haeresium* and the texts to be analysed in the following represent credible information regarding the existence of sects proposing an exalted Melchizedek.

6.5 Epiphanius of Salamis

6.5.1 Introduction to Epiphanius

Epiphanius, born ca. 315 in Palestine, served as bishop of Salamis in Cyprus until his death in 403, and became known as a great opponent of

[543] Contrary to the conclusion reached by Bardy, "Melchisédech", 1927, and Stock, *Melchizedekianer*. However, neither scholar had access to the wealth of exalted Melchizedek traditions discovered since and analysed in this dissertation.

heresies.[544] In particular, Epiphanius' efforts to uphold Nicene Orthodoxy meant that he focused on combating the perceived unorthodox works of Origen and his followers.[545] Epiphanius wrote the *Panarion* (or the *Medicine Chest*, often referred to as the *Haereses*) between 375 and 378.[546] In this treatise, Epiphanius presents a systematic attack on all eighty heresies known to him.

Among the many sects listed by our author, we find Melchizedek mentioned in connection with several. These references are based on material from Hippolytus, but Epiphanius has included a wealth of new information. Among his sources, Epiphanius lists his *fondness for study*, hearsay, and the works of ancient authors (*Proem* 2.2.4).[547] We may discern among these authors the works of Justin, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and material from Pseudo-Tertullian's *Adversus omnes haereses*—a text we will examine now, prior to discussing the Melchizedek sects described by Epiphanius.

6.5.2 Pseudo-Tertullian's *Adversus Omnes Haereses*

Within Tertullian's *De praescriptione haereticorum*, chapters 46–53 constitute a late insertion.[548] This appendix was later given the title *Adversus omnes haereses*, and its author is referred to as Pseudo-Tertullian. This catalogue of thirty-two heresies appears to be a condensation of Hippolytus' *Syntagma* (now lost), material from the writings of Irenaeus, and other, unique sources. The insertion appears to predate the *Panarion*, as Epiphanius lists the sects in an order similar to Pseudo-Tertullian.[549] The composition's date may thus be any time before Epiphanius' *Panarion*; a date of ca. 300–350 appears plausible.

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[544] Cf. Stanley Jerome Isser, *The Dositheans: A Samaritan Sect in Late Antiquity* (Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 17; Leiden: Brill, 1976), 38, and Frederick W. Norris, "Ephiphanius of Salamis", in *EEC* (ed. Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris; New York: Garland, 1998), 380.

[545] Cf. Norris, "Theophilus", 380, and Frank Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis Book I (1–46)* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), xi–xvi.

[546] Williams, *Panarion I*, xiii. Horton, *Melchizedek*, 94, feels more confident, and dates this work to 377 C.E.

[547] Greek text from Karl Holl, *Epiphanius: Ancoratus und Panarion* (vol. 1–3; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1915). Translations from Williams, *Panarion I*, and Frank Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis Book II and III (47–80, De Fide)* (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

[548] Cf. Isser, *Dositheans*, 33–34.

[549] Cf. ibid., 34–35; 57–63, for a detailed discussion of the connection between these texts.

Adversus omnes haereses reuses the majority of the information given by Hippolytus concerning the Melchizedekians, but new information is given regarding the followers of Theodotus the Banker: according to Pseudo-Tertullian's version, the followers of Theodotus the Banker believed that Melchizedek was a great *celestial power* (*nam illum Melchisedech praecipuae gratiae coelestem esse virtutem*).[550] The Melchizedekians believed that Melchizedek was superior to Christ, because Melchizedek had no mother, father, genealogy (cf. Heb 7:3), beginning, or end (*ut apator sit, ametor sit, agenealogetos sit, cujus neque initium, neque finis*). The Melchizedekians found these elements made Melchizedek an entirely unfathomable being (*comprehensus sit aut comprehendi possit*). In addition, while the purpose of Christ was to be the intercessor and to advocate for humanity (*eo quod agat Christus pro hominibus deprecator et advocatus*), Melchizedek had comparable functions, but in respect of all heavenly beings (*ipsorum factus Melchisedech facere pro coelestibus angelis atque virtutibus*). Pseudo-Tertullian's new information in *Adversus omnes haereses* serves to set the Melchizedekian sect further apart from the Theodotians. Instead of merely another adoptionist movement, the view attributed them by Pseudo-Tertullian, marks them as quite distinct in theology.

6.5.3 Melchizedek in *Panarion*

Returning to Epiphanius' *Panarion*, the first mention of the figure of Melchizedek occurs in 55.1.1. Here Epiphanius turns his attention to a sect that is clearly identical to the one encountered in Hippolytus and Pseudo-Tertullian's texts. However, Epiphanius provides further details about both the Melchizedekians and on a wealth of sectarian communities who similarly attributed exalted traits to the Melchizedek figure. Apart from coining the term *Melchizedekians* to describe the followers of Theodotus the Banker, Epiphanius informs us that this sect produced numerous writings (55.1.5: *They also fabricate spurious books of their own deception* (πλάττουσι δὲ ἑαυτοῖς καὶ βίβλους ἐπιπλάστους ἑαυτοὺς ἀπατῶντες)). In these books, they detailed their beliefs in an exalted Melchizedek. The Melchizedekians' beliefs were, according to Epiphanius, derived from a false interpretation of Hebrews, caused by their lack of *spiritual understanding of the things the apostle said in this same Epistle to the*

[550] Latin text from Migne, Series Latina, vol. 2.

Hebrews, they have been condemned by a fleshly sentence (σαρκικῶς γὰρ οἱ τοιοῦτοι ἀνεκρίθησαν) (55.5.1).

This "fleshly sentence" had led the Melchizedekians to *honour the Melchizedek who is mentioned in the scriptures and regard him as a sort of great power* (cf. Pseudo-Tertullian). The sect further believed that Melchizedek *is on high in places, which cannot be named, and (in fact) is not just a power; indeed, they claim in their error that he is greater than Christ* (55.1.2). Allegedly, they had arrived at this understanding through their interpretation of Ps 110:4, whereby Christ was *given the order of Melchizedek*, and is *thus younger than Melchizedek* (55.1.3). In addition, based on this and Heb 7:3, they claimed that the reason Melchizedek had no genealogy was because he was just this celestial *great power*.

Epiphanius proceeds to counter this theology by explaining why the Melchizedekians' beliefs are wrong (55.1.6–8). Among the reasons he gives is what Epiphanius views as historical evidence of Melchizedek's lineage, although he admits that this is not based *on the canonical, covenanted scriptures* (55.2.1). According to Epiphanius' information, Melchizedek's father was Heracles, and his mother was Astarth (or Astoriane). The family lived on the Plain of Save in Salem, which Epiphanius suggests was Jerusalem, Jebus, or some city in the plain of Sicimi (55.2.2).

Epiphanius then discusses the meeting between Melchizedek and Abraham from Gen 14:18–20, influenced by the exegesis of Justin. Epiphanius adds to the narrative that, although the *circumcised priesthood* would later originate from Abraham, the patriarch was compelled to honour Melchizedek, as Melchizedek was the *first priest who served without circumcision, so that "Every huge thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" would be humbled* (55.2.4). Melchizedek served God *by perfect righteousness and virtue, and with body uncircumcised* (55.3.1 τοῦ οὐκ ἐν περιτομῇ ἀλλὰ ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ μὲν τελειότητος καὶ ἀρετῇ).

Epiphanius emphasizes that the Melchizedek met by Abraham was, and always remained, a man (55.3.2). He had *no part of (the order) in Heaven, and has not come down from Heaven* (55.4.1). Interestingly, Epiphanius mentions twice that Melchizedek's priesthood was neither abolished nor taken from him (55.4.4). This could indicate that Epiphanius knew of traditions similar to what we found in the Babylonian Talmud *Nedarim* tractate.

Epiphanius continues his rebuke of the exalted Melchizedek traditions, beginning with the claim that the lack of a genealogy in Genesis for Melchizedek meant that he was an angel. To counter this, Epiphanius gives several examples of figures similarly lacking genealogies in Scripture. He concludes this list by stating that he *truly hopes* no one would be foolish

enough to consider all Scriptural figures who lack genealogies to be angels (55.3.5–8).

Epiphanius, apparently satisfied that the beliefs of the Melchizedekians have been sufficiently refuted, turns his attention to other sects that, in his view, harboured similarly false beliefs concerning Melchizedek. The first of these is called the *Samaritans* (Σαμαρεῖται). Epiphanius states that these people claimed that Melchizedek was Shem, Noah's son (55.6.1). While we have found no such tradition among the Samaritan references to the Melchizedek figure, this information indicates that Epiphanius was aware of similar traditions to what we found in the Palestinian Targumim and *Nedarim*—traditions attributed by Epiphanius to the Samaritans. Epiphanius finds the notion of Melchizedek actually being Shem is simply *absurd* (55.6.1). He demonstrates this through a lengthy calculation using data from Genesis, concluding that Melchizedek would have lived some ten generations before Abraham (55.6.3–11). Epiphanius states that the tradition, which he calls *Samaritan's jabber*, is *all wrong*.

Following this, Epiphanius briefly relates a tradition we have not found elsewhere. This material, attributed to something *the Jews say* (55.7.1–2), concerns the reason that Melchizedek's parents do not appear in Scripture. According to Epiphanius' material, Melchizedek *was the son of a harlot*, and thus the identity of his father was a mystery. The lack of any reference to this accusation might indicate that this is an attempt to disguise Epiphanius' own slandering of the Melchizedek figure, in order to further rebuke the sectarian theology. Yet he continues by describing this idea as nothing more than a *silly assertion*, and lists a number of figures who were included in Scripture, even though they were considered to have committed fornication.

Epiphanius follows this wealth of Melchizedek traditions with a description of the belief held by *some who are members of the church* (55.7.3). This presumably refers to believers in exalted Melchizedek theology who nonetheless were considered part of the Church. They were thus a community different to the previously mentioned Melchizedekians, Samaritans, Jews, and the Hieracites mentioned later by Epiphanius. In this case, these members of the Church also exhibited an exalted Melchizedekian theology. According to Epiphanius' undisclosed sources, they believed that Melchizedek is the Son of God, a belief which led the sect to offer sacrifices in the name of Melchizedek, claiming him to be *the archon of righteousness* (ὅτι ἄρχων ἐστὶ δικαιοσύνης) *ordained in heaven by God for this very purpose, a spiritual being and appointed to God's priesthood* (55.8.1). The sectarians believed that Christ had been sent to lead people to Melchizedek, the actual son of God (55.8.5). The beliefs of these members of the Church provoke a lengthy diatribe by Epiphanius

concerning Christ's superior position to Melchizedek (55.9.6–10). Epiphanius offers two arguments as to why *the Son was always with the Father*. The first thus: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"; it did not say, "In the beginning was Melchizedek", or, "And Melchizedek was God"* (55.9.6). The second argument is as follows: *See, then, the Father! See, the Son! See the Holy Spirit—and nowhere does it say that Melchizedek has his dwelling among the gifts or in the heights* (55.9.10). Both arguments appear somewhat exasperated or humorous, as though Epiphanius did not take these claims entirely serious.

Epiphanius then concludes the first part of his review of Melchizedek sects with the inclusion of yet another unnamed group. These, simply described as those *who are the furthest afield of all*, claim that Melchizedek and God are the same being (55.9.11–12). Unfortunately, Epiphanius appears to have found this notion so absurd that he considered there to be no further need to discuss it. Our modern curiosity is thus far from sated as to the identity of this sect, how they arrived at their Melchizedekian beliefs, and if they still regarded themselves as part of the Church. Epiphanius' inclusion of the sect following the ones described as "members of the church" may indicate they did.

6.5.4 Excursus on Melchizedek in the Writings of Ambrose

The sectarian beliefs mentioned by Epiphanius share several similarities with the exalted Melchizedek traditions we have examined in the *Melchizedek Tractate*, the *2 Book of Jeu*, and *Pistis Sophia*. However, Epiphanius provides unique information when he claims that those who believed Melchizedek to be the true son of God (and perhaps those who believed Melchizedek to be God) remained within the Church. The closest to any such theology that we can find is in the contemporary writings of the Christian author and bishop, Ambrose (ca. 374–397).[551]

In Ambrose's *Hexaemeron*, we read that *Melchizedek blessed Abraham, the forefather of many peoples, saying: "Blessed be Abram by the most high God, creator of heaven and earth". And Abraham believed God and said: "I raise my hand to the Lord God most high, creator of heaven and earth". You see that this was not an invention made by man, but an announcement made by God. For God is Melchizedek, that is, "He is king*

[551] Cf. Wuttke, *Melchisedech*, 58. See Louis J. Swift, "Ambrose", in *EEC* (ed. Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris; New York: Garland, 1998), 41-44, for an introduction to the life and writings of Ambrose.

of peace and justice, having neither the beginning of days nor end of life" (1.3.8–9).[552] While Ambrose is here interpreting the name of Melchizedek as an explanation of God's nature, the passage has been interpreted as stating that Melchizedek was indeed God.[553] The figure of Melchizedek in Ambrose's theology is further complicated by what could be interpreted as the identification of Melchizedek with the Son of God in *De Abrahamo* 1.3.

However, these interpretations should probably be regarded as allegorical explanations of the nature of God and of the Son, rather than identifications between Melchizedek and God or the Son. Such an allegorical interpretation is just what we find in *De Mysteriis* (65.45–46), where Ambrose states that Melchizedek was made like unto the Son of God, following the text of Hebrews.[554] That this was indeed what Ambrose meant is emphasized in his *De Fide*, where he states that Melchizedek was not *an angel, as the Church hath received it from Jewish nonsense, but a holy man* and a priest of God (3.11).[555] These passages show that Ambrose's use of the Melchizedek figure in the *Hexaemeron* and *De Abrahamo*, should be considered to be located in the neutral category of interpretation.

Returning to the *Panarion*, we find that Epiphanius revisits the Melchizedek figure in chapter 67. In this chapter, Epiphanius lists the last of the sects he knew of that believed in an exalted Melchizedek. This sect,

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[552] Translation from H. de Romestin, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Second Series. Volume X: St. Ambrose: Some of the Principal Works of St. Ambrose* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1989).

[553] Cf. Philip E. Hughes, *Commentary on Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1977), 242, for the view that Ambrose was "positively identifying" Melchizedek as God.

[554] The full text of the passage from *De Mysteriis* is *But Abraham is far earlier; who, when he had won the victory, defeating the enemy and recovering his own nephew, was then met by Melchizedek who brought forth the gifts which Abraham received with reverence. It was not Abraham that brought them forth, but Melchizedek, who is represented as being without father, without mother, having neither beginning of days nor end, but like unto the Son of God; of whom Paul says in the Epistle to the Hebrews that he abideth a priest continually, who in the Latin version is called King of righteousness, King of peace. Do you not recognize who this is? Can a man be King of righteousness, when he is hardly righteous himself? Can he be King of peace when he can hardly be peaceable? It is he who is without mother, as touching his Godhead, because he was begotten of his Father who is God, being of one substance with the Father; without father, as touching his incarnation, for he was born of the Virgin; not having beginning, and end, because he is the beginning and the end of all, the first and the last* (65:45–46).

[555] While we have not found any rabbinic sources resembling this "Jewish nonsense", the claim that Melchizedek was an angel resembles most traditions found in the exalted category of interpretation. The accusation also resembles the (probably false) claim of Jerome (*Ad Evangelum* 2, from 398), mentioned in Gianotto, *Melchisedek*, 166–169, that Origen (and Didymus the Blind) believed Melchizedek to be an angel.

the Hieracites, led by Hieracas, also held unorthodox views on Melchizedek.[556] In 67.7.1, Epiphanius tells us that the Hieracites claimed that *Melchizedek himself is the Spirit—in that case, the Spirit came and took flesh. It cannot be just the Only-begotten who has been born in the flesh; the Spirit must have too. But if the Spirit was born in the flesh—well it was Mary who bore the Saviour.*

The Hieracites also believed that *the Son is really begotten of the Father and that the Holy Spirit is of the Father. However as I* [Epiphanius] *remarked above in the Sect of the Melchizedekians, he* [Hieracas] *claims that the Holy Spirit is Melchizedek himself because he has said, "He maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered". And who is this? Who but (the one who) remains a priest forever?* According to Epiphanius, Hieracas held the view that Gen 14 and Heb 7 are silent on the genealogy of Melchizedek because Melchizedek, the Holy Spirit, had no mother and no earthly father.

Epiphanius terms the beliefs of the Hieracites a *lot of nonsense* (67.3.3), but nonetheless he feels compelled to enter into a lengthy exegesis on Heb 7:3 (67.7.2–8). He argues that the Holy Spirit could not have been Melchizedek, and shows how Hieracas' theology disagrees with Heb 7:3. He also refutes the idea that Melchizedek had God as his father. He does so by claiming that the reference to Melchizedek *without father* is faulty on two accounts. First, even the Holy Spirit *who "proceedeth from the Father" and "receiveth of me", cannot be "without father*". Second, Epiphanius claims that he has found evidence of Melchizedek's true genealogy in certain traditions, although he does not state what these are or where he acquired this information. Interestingly, he did not mention this information in his first section devoted to Melchizedekian sects. Yet according to Epiphanius, the traditions he has discovered prove that Melchizedek was *descended from the Sidonians and the Canaanites*. (67.7.7). Epiphanius concludes his treatment of Hieracas with great confidence, claiming that the Hieracites' *fairy tale has crumbled* (67.7.8).

6.5.5 Conclusions to Melchizedek in *Panarion*

Epiphanius with his *Panarion* is the last in our list of Christian authors who describe sects that believe in an exalted Melchizedek. Yet while the

[556] While little is known of Hieracas from other sources, according to Epiphanius (67.3.7–9; 68.1.2), Hieracas was an ascetic who lived in Egypt during the time of Diocletian, and worked as a calligrapher.

previous authors (Hippolytus and Pseudo-Tertullian) focused on a single sect, the Melchizedekians, Epiphanius presents numerous sectarian theologies containing an exalted Melchizedek. In all of these, Melchizedek is an exalted being, though in each he has a different status and function.

Epiphanius' description of the Melchizedekians makes use of material from both Hippolytus and Pseudo-Tertullian's accounts of a sect who believed Melchizedek to be a great *celestial power* functioning as the intercessor and advocate for all heavenly beings, including Christ. In Epiphanius' account the sect's background is repeated with the additional information that they produced writings of their own and had, through a unique interpretation of Hebrews, come to believe that Melchizedek, the *great power*, was an exalted being situated in Heaven at a rank higher than Christ.

Another community, apparently still part of the church, saw Melchizedek as the son of God (55.7–8). They offered sacrifices to this *archon of righteousness*, a spiritual being. Christ has been sent to inform people to follow Melchizedek, who functioned as a priest in heaven ordained by God. A related sect seems to have carried this theology to its next step, and believed Melchizedek to be none other than God himself (55.9). The final sect, the followers of Hieracas, identified Melchizedek as the Holy Spirit (67.7). With this so-called *fairy tale*, Epiphanius has thus references to four sects who, in their belief in an exalted Melchizedek, range from interpreting the figure as an angelic being to God himself.

In addition to his own polemical responses to these beliefs, Epiphanius reveals knowledge of a tradition of substituting Shem for Melchizedek, similar to the one we found in the Palestinian Targumim—although he ascribes this *absurd* tradition to the Samaritans (55.6.1). He also knew of a tradition in which Melchizedek's priesthood was removed from him (55.4.4), which resembles the account in *Nedarim*. Finally, he also presents *silly assertions* ascribed to certain "Jews", according to which Melchizedek was the son of a harlot, his father thus being entirely unknown (55.7.1–2). We have not encountered this tradition elsewhere, but it would effectively remove any possibility of building a sectarian priesthood upon the Melchizedek figure.

Epiphanius claims to have historical evidence of the genealogy of Melchizedek. Melchizedek, he says, was the son of Heracles and Astarth, lived in Salem (55.2), and was the descendent of the Sidonians and Canaanites (67.7.7). This information effectively removes the possibility of the sectarian belief in an exalted Melchizedek and his celestial priesthood (55.4.1). Epiphanius describes the meeting between Melchizedek and Abraham as a historic event, and focuses on the uncircumcised nature of the priest honoured by Abraham, like the description found in Justin, Theophilius, Tertullian, and Cyprian. Epiphanius' own treatment of the

figure presents a balanced account that serves to make any exalted traits impossible by grounding the figure within an earthly genealogy, yet still presents Melchizedek as an important figure (serving God, for example, *by perfect righteousness and virtue*, 55.3.1) upon whom the priesthood of Christ could be based.

Epiphanius appears informed of the exalted Melchizedek traditions that regarded the figure as an angelic being, a divinity, and most things in between. By the amount of attention he devotes to refuting these claims, he makes it plausible to imagine that there were a large number of communities believing in related exalted Melchizedek figures and possessing traditions similar to the theology we found in the *Melchizedek Tractate*, *2 Jeu*, and *Pistis Sophia*. The claims attributed to the "Jews" and the Samaritans, along with the emphasis that Epiphanius places on stressing that Melchizedek's priesthood was never removed from him, indicates that he was also aware of the traditions of the Palestinian Targumim and the Talmud Tractates previously analysed. As a whole, Epiphanius' plethora of traditions provides additional evidence for the numerous exalted Melchizedek traditions, and that there was a continued exegetical interest in the Melchizedek figure.

6.6 The Babylonian Talmud: The *Sukkah* Tractate

6.6.1 Introduction to the *Sukkah* Tractate

The third and final reference to the Melchizedek figure in the Babylonian Talmud occurs in the *Sukkah* tractate (*Booth*), part of the *Seder Mo'ed*. While brief and extant only in a single manuscript, the setting in which the Melchizedek figure appears is surprising, considering the rabbinic use of the figure encountered so far.

6.6.2 Melchizedek in the *Sukkah* Tractate

In the passage *Sukkah* 52b, we find a discussion of Zech 2:3 (*and the Lord showed me four craftsmen*). The rabbis turn to the question of the identity of the four craftsmen mentioned in Zecharia. According to *R. Hana b. Bizna, citing R. Simeon Hasida*, the correct interpretation is *the Messiah the*

son of David, the Messiah the son of Joseph, Elijah and the Righteous Priest (כהן צדק).[557]

However, in just one of the numerous manuscripts to the Babylonian Talmud, we find a variant reading. Manuscript M. (the *Munich Codex of the Talmud*)[558] to *Sukkah* 52b substitutes *Melchizedek* for *the Righteous Priest*: *the Messiah, son of David, the Messiah, son of Joseph, Elijah and Melchizedek*. Thus, Manuscript M. suggests that the last of the four workers from Zechariah should be identified as Melchizedek.[559]

This variant reading of the *Sukkah* thus puts the name of Melchizedek in impressive company, but the origin of this variant reading is unknown.[560] Considering that all other manuscript versions, as well as most later renditions of the text (for instance, the *Avot de Rabbi Nathan*, ca. the eighth century), present a different reading of this passage, it appears that the variant reading is a tradition confined to Manuscript M. and a few related texts, such as the *Song of Songs Rabbah* (ca. the sixth or seventh

[557] Hebrew text and English translations of the *Sukkah* are from I. W Slotki, *Sukkah* (Hebrew-English Edition of The Babylonian Talmud; ed. Isidore Epstein; London: Soncino Press, 1984). On the problematic issue of the attribution of sayings to specific rabbis, see Kalmin, "Talmud", 860–861.

[558] This manuscript has been described by Marvin J. Heller, *Printing the Talmud: A History of the Individual Treatises Printed from 1700–1750* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 21 n.15, thus: "The Munchen (Munich) Talmud is the manuscript Talmud discovered by Raphael Natan Nuta Rabbinovicz in the Royal Library in Munich. Written in 1342, it is complete and uncensored, the only such extant codex Talmud". The manuscript contains numerous variant readings, characterized as "scribal errors", the result of the scribe's lack of familiarity with the style of the Jerusalem Talmud; cf. ibid.

[559] Further explained by Slotki, *Sukkah*, n.p., as a reading based on Melchizedek being "the best type of Monotheist of the non-Jewish race".

[560] It is interesting to note that, although Horton apparently was unaware of the variant reading in MS M., he nonetheless identified the Righteous Priest from *Sukkah* 52b with Melchizedek. He arrived at this conclusion mainly on the basis of the later *Song of Songs Rabbah* (ca. 6th or 7th century); cf. Horton, *Melchizedek*, 124–126. This text contains a parallel reading to MS M. of *Sukkah* 52b: *R. Berechiah in the name of R. Isaac: It is written, 'And the Lord showed me four craftsmen, namely Elijah and King Messiah, and Melchizedek, and the one Anointed for War'* (2.13.4). In the case of Balla, *Melchizedekian*, 40–41, who follows Horton's initial premises entirely (and thus also does not appear familiar with MS M.), he finds that these brief mentions prove—precisely because they are brief—that there was "a strong tradition" among the rabbinic sources to portray Melchizedek as an exalted figure. While we may agree that there appears to have been increased importance attached to the figure towards the end of the first millennium, we only have a single variant reading of one Talmud tractate that contains any such notion. Thus Balla's suggestion appears somewhat unfounded. Further, his conclusion that this tradition was old (although he does not say how old he considers it) could only be reached because he does not include any of the Targumim among his sources, apart from a single sentence (ibid., p. 38).

century).[561] This would agree with Heller's assessment of Manuscript M. as one containing numerous variant readings, apparently scribal errors, perhaps caused by the scribe's lack of familiarity with the style of the Jerusalem Talmud.

6.6.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in the *Sukkah* tractate

Manuscript M. of the Babylonian *Sukkah* tractate presents a variant reading of passage 52b. In this, we find a tradition that listed Melchizedek as one of the four workers from Zecharia 2:3. The reading may be the result of a scribal error, but in its present state it constitutes an example of Melchizedek set in the context of eschatological figures, and is thus best described as an exalted example of the figure. Unfortunately, the age of this tradition is unknown, and we do thus not know whether it derives from before the two other Melchizedek references in the Talmud or from later rabbinic speculation at a time when the temporal distance to the sectarian uses of the Melchizedek figure was great enough to allow the rehabilitation of the figure.

Sukkah 52b in MS M. completes, along with tractates *Baba Batra* and *Nedarim*, the appearance of each of our three interpretative categories within the Babylonian Talmud. While *Baba Batra* presented an example of the figure being used in a neutral manner, and *Nedarim* presented a polemical treatment of Melchizedek, *Sukkah* (MS M.) presents us with a case in which the figure is used in all three ways within the same text corpus. Although the reason behind the variant reading of *Sukkah* 52b is unknown, the passage in its current state presents evidence of several Melchizedek traditions within established rabbinic Judaism—traditions that would appear to be incompatible with each other (as we also found the case to be between the Palestinian Targumim and *Targum Onqelos*), but which were nonetheless included within the same Talmud.

[561] Cf. Heller, *Talmud*, 21n15.

6.7 The *Cave of Treasures*

6.7.1 Introduction to the *Cave of Treasures*

The *Cave of Treasures* derives its descriptive title from the cave in which Adam and Eve allegedly lived after leaving Paradise, and to which the angels brought gold, myrrh, and incense.[562] The composition of the *Cave of Treasures* has traditionally been dated to the late fourth century.[563] The author of the composition is unknown, but commonly referred to as Pseudo-Ephrem. Based on the text's content, however, the author appears to have been a Christian well-versed in both Scripture and the New Testament, who was also familiar with a wide range of noncanonical traditions.[564] These traditions have been combined to provide an account of history ranging from the creation of Adam to the birth of Christ, focusing on the presentation of Adam as the prototype of Christ.[565] The history of the priesthood is another central aspect for the author. According to the *Cave of Treasures*, the first priest was Adam, and the last priest is Christ.

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[562] Earnest A. W. Budge, *The Book of the Cave of Treasures* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1927), 43. All translations are from ibid., unless otherwise noted. As Budge did not apply numbered chapters to his translation of the Syriac text, B. M. Add. 25875, references are to the relevant pages.

[563] A date initially suggested by ibid., 26, based on the language and subject of the text, and followed by most scholars since, cf. e.g. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 91, and Marinus de Jonge and Johannes Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature* (Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 85. The Syriac version is more complete, and in several passages Syriac is claimed to be the most perfect language (e.g. 132; 230), allowing us to presume that B. M. 25875 represents the closest version to the original text. However, even the Syriac text reveals evidence of being a compilation of several sources, and parts of the text may be significantly older than the 4th century. An example of the compositional layers within the text is the three different titles supplied by the manuscript. In addition to *Cave of Treasure*, at the beginning of the text we find the title *Book of the Succession of the Generations*, while at the end it is called *Book of the Order of the Succession of Families from Adam to Christ*. There are also later Ethiopic (cf. Carl Bezold, *Die Schatzhöhle*, 2 vols. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1883–1888) and Arabic versions (Cf. Margaret D. Gibson, *Apocrypha Arabica*, Studia Sinaitica 8, London: CUP, 1901), in addition to fragmentary passages surviving in Georgian and Coptic.

[564] Cf. Budge, *Cave of Treasures*, 21–22, and Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 92, who describes the text as "permeated with relatively late Christian ideas". In its title, the text is attributed to Ephrem the Syrian (306–373), yet the differences in style and subject makes this unlikely. However, the suggested date of composition would make it more or less contemporary with Ephrem.

[565] Cf. Budge, *Cave of Treasures*, 35–37.

Between these two priests, we find the figure of Melchizedek, who in this text is described as the descendent of Adam chosen to be the priest of God until the coming of Christ (122–123).

6.7.2 Melchizedek in the *Cave of Treasures*

The Melchizedek figure enters the story line as Noah is close to death. Noah's final wish involves both Shem, his son, and Melchizedek. In this version, Melchizedek is cast as the 15-year old son of Mâlâkh and Yôzadhâk.[566] Shem is instructed to secretly bring Melchizedek (along with bread and wine) to the Ark, where the body of Adam has lain ever since his death.[567] Once Shem and Melchizedek have reached the Ark, they are to remove the body of Adam and bring it to its final resting place. This place, revealed by God, is at the centre of the earth, Gâghûltâ (Golgatha) (127). Melchizedek is then to perform the last rites for Adam, according to the commands that were given by God to Adam and handed down through all the generations to Noah, Shem, and Melchizedek (123). Shem and Melchizedek accomplish their duty in secret, assisted by the *Angel of the Lord*. Afterwards, Shem returns alone, deceiving Melchizedek's parents into believing that their son had died on the journey.[568]

Before departing, Shem delivers the rules governing Melchizedek's eternal priesthood: Melchizedek is *to sit down* and to remain at the location to serve as God's chosen priest for ever at this place: *Thou shalt be the priest of the Most High God, because thou alone hath God chosen to minister before Him in this place. And thou shalt sit here continually, and shalt not depart from this place all the days of thy life* (129). Melchizedek will not be allowed to marry, to shave his head, to pour out blood, or to sacrifice wild beast or feathered fowl. The only allowed sacrifices are the

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[566] Mâlâkh is described as the brother of Shâlâh, son of Cainan, and grandson of Arphaxad (126). A marginal note, of unknown date, has added: *Know, O my brother readers, that in the manuscript belonging to the priest Makbal I have seen that Melchizedek's father was called Harklêîm, and his mother Sheêlâthêîl* (fol. 39a), cf. Earnest A. W. Budge, *Book of the Bee* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886), 34 n.5. In the version of this story from the *Book of the Bee* (from ca. the 13th century and dependent upon the *Cave of Treasures*), the names Harklêîm and Shêlâthîêl from Makbal's manuscript reappear, cf. ibid., 122–130.

[567] The text several times repeats the command to carry out the instructions in secrecy; e.g., in 122, Shem is told to *let no man have knowledge of what thou doest*, and in 123, *take heed that this story is never mentioned again in all your generations*.

[568] 129–130: [Melchizedek's parents] *said: Where is the young man? And [Shem] said: He died on the journey and I buried him there. And they mourned for him greatly*.

bread and wine used in the last rites of Adam. Nor is Melchizedek permitted to build a temple or any other construction at the site, although he did build an altar as part of the burial ceremony of Adam. During his vigilance, *the Angel of the Lord shall come down to thee and visit thee continually* (129).

The author of the *Cave of Treasures* thus initially leaves Melchizedek sitting eternally in secret at the centre of the Earth, but later the text returns to Melchizedek in its description of the life of Abraham. In a rewriting of Gen 14:19–20, Abraham returns from *the battle of the kings* and is met by Melchizedek, *the king of Shâlîm, the priest of the Most High God* (148). However, in the *Cave of Treasures*' version, it is Abraham who meets his superior: *When Abraham saw Melchizedek, he made haste and fell upon his face, and did homage to him, and he rose up from the ground and embraced him, and kissed him*. Melchizedek bestows his blessing upon Abraham, and following the tithing (in which Abraham offers Melchizedek a tithe of all his possessions), Melchizedek *made him participate in the Holy Mysteries, of the bread of the offering and the wine of the redemption* (148). Following these holy mysteries, God then takes part directly in the meeting: *God spake unto Abraham, and said unto him: Thy reward is exceedingly great. Since Melchizedek hath blessed thee, and hath made thee to partake of bread and wine*, God will also bless Abraham and *assuredly multiply thy seed*. God thus confirms his chosen priest's blessing and grants the patriarch fertility because of Melchizedek's actions. This blessing shortly afterwards brings about the birth of Ishmael, and fourteen years later, Isaac (148–149).

Abraham and Melchizedek meet again a second time in the *Cave of Treasures*, as Abraham brings his son, Isaac, to meet Melchizedek at the centre of the earth (149–150). Melchizedek's place of vigilance is the location where Abraham intends to sacrifice Isaac to God, although the *Cave of Treasures* mentions no command from God to do so. In this rewriting of the *Aqedah*, the offering is halted, not by an angel or by Melchizedek, but because Abraham is suddenly granted a vision of the future crucifixion of Christ and its consequences: *Abraham saw the day of the redemption of Adam, and he saw and rejoiced, and it was revealed to him that Christ would suffer on behalf of Adam* (150).

Later in the same year, Melchizedek's contemplations are once again interrupted, this time by the arrival of twelve kings, including Karda'mar (Chedorlaomer), the king of Elam, and Bârâ, the king of Sodom (151). Upon seeing Melchizedek and hearing his words, these *kings of the nations* decide that this must be *the king of the whole earth, and the father of all kings* (152). They initially attempt to persuade Melchizedek to come with them, but the request is refused because Melchizedek is *not able to go from this place to any other*. Instead, the twelve kings decide to build

Melchizedek a city worthy of him at the place of Adam's grave. Melchizedek names this city Jerusalem upon its completion (152).

The rumours of the mighty king and his city at the centre of the world brings a thirteenth king, Mâghôgh (Magog), king of the south, to visit Melchizedek. Mâghôgh also pays homage to the king and gives *offerings and gifts* to Melchizedek, whereupon the narrative passages involving Melchizedek are brought to a close by the author's comments that Melchizedek *was held in honour by all, and he was called the "Father of Kings*".[569]

Following these two versions of Melchizedek being honoured by kings, the text abruptly turns to a discussion of the nature of Melchizedek (152–153). In this, we are told that the description in Heb 7:3 that Melchizedek was *without beginning to his days and no end to his life* has caused some, described as *simple folk*, to believe that Melchizedek was not *a man at all*. Instead, they believed him to be God himself (cf., *Pan.* 55.9.11–12). To counter such beliefs, the author emphasizes that the genealogy of Melchizedek was known and that he was the son of Mâlâkh and Yôzadhâk. The author further develops the genealogy by informing his readers that Melchizedek was also part of Noah's family. Finally, the author explains that the reason Melchizedek in Hebrews was said to have had no father and no mother was only because they were not mentioned in the genealogies of Matthew and Luke, who had only included names of patriarchs in their lists (153).

6.7.3 Conclusions to Melchizedek in the *Cave of Treasures*

The Syriac *Cave of Treasures* contains multiple compositional layers, including several traditions concerning the life and priestly service of

[569] In the *Book of Adam*, a later text apparently dependent upon the *Cave of Treasures* we find a description of Melchizedek, who is said to wear a tunic of skin, a leather belt, and to have been continually protected by an angel (3.16–21). The *Book of Adam* narrates that once Melchizedek had become old, eleven kings visited him and because they found him to be *the king of all the earth, and the father of nations*, they built Melchizedek a city, which he afterwards named Jerusalem. The *Book of Adam* also contains an abbreviated account of the rest of the Melchizedek passage in the *Cave of Treasures*. In this, it is Melchizedek's father who is told by the *Angel of the Face* to send his fifteen-year-old son away with Shem. The two remove the body of Adam from a sealed room in the Ark. The door had been locked, but as soon as Melchizedek touches it, the lock springs open, and the voice of Adam affirms that Melchizedek is the true *priest of the Most High God*. Afterwards, Adam is buried in a golden coffin at the centre of the earth, where Melchizedek built an altar of twelve stones, cf., ibid., 128–130.

Melchizedek, and is a composition of related Melchizedek traditions, similar to what we have seen in, for instance, *Pistis Sophia*. However, in the case of the *Cave of Treasures*, we also find polemical comments regarding the correct interpretation of Hebrews 7:3.

The first of the layers (although not necessarily the oldest) narrates a unique tradition concerning Melchizedek's functions regarding the burial of Adam, which at the same time provides the background to his service as an eternal priest at Salem. In this layer, two elements are noteworthy: The first is the focus on Melchizedek as the chosen priest of God—a function which positions Melchizedek not only as an eternal priest at Jerusalem, but also as the one who is entrusted with keeping the priesthood ritually pure, through the observation of the strict rules governing his service.

The second element of note is the reappearance of a close connection between Melchizedek and Shem. This connection is especially noteworthy based on our analysis of *2 Enoch* and its substitution of the Noah-Shem line for the Nir-Melchizedek branch of the family, as well as the substitution of Shem for Melchizedek found in the polemical tradition of the Palestinian Targumim, the *Nedarim* Tractate, and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*. In the Syriac version of the *Cave of Treasures*, the function of Shem is peculiar: Shem is the primary agent in establishing Melchizedek as the chosen priest of God, while at the same time, he is the one who effectively removes Melchizedek from both society and history by observing the command to secrecy and deceiving Melchizedek's parents. Thus, this layer presents a narrative that accomplishes much the same as the polemical tradition intended, ensuring that Melchizedek's service would effectively remain unknown to everyone, as long as the command to secrecy was in effect. Indeed, we may speculate that there was an original version of this story in which only Melchizedek went to the centre of the earth, buried Abraham, and afterwards served as priest of Salem. To this tradition, the actions of Shem may have been incorporated, perhaps in order to align the story with the theology behind the polemical traditions, or as a means of preserving the focus on the Noachic family in response to traditions similar to *2 Enoch*.

In the second layer, the focus is on Abraham and his relationship with Melchizedek, while Shem and the secrecy commands have disappeared. While the vision received by Abraham (150) appears to be a later Christian interpolation, Abraham's reaction to Melchizedek is continually written in this layer so as to emphasize the Patriarch's subjugation to Melchizedek. We thus have evidence of the Genesis *Vorlage* being rewritten in order to extol Melchizedek through the actions of Abraham, directly opposite to what we found to be the case in earlier texts, for example Genesis, *Greek Fragment on the Life of Abraham* and *Genesis Apocryphon*. In this layer, the figure of Melchizedek functions as the chosen priest of God, and is recognized and honoured as such by Abraham. The relationship between

Melchizedek and his God is such that it is only because Melchizedek chose to bless Abraham that the famous blessing was extended to him by God, allowing the patriarchal family line to survive.

The third layer centres upon Melchizedek's service at the centre of the world. Here Melchizedek is sought out, in two separate versions, by a range of noteworthy kings, and is duly honoured by these. As in the Abraham layer, no evidence of Shem or the command to secrecy is apparent. Quite the opposite seems to be the case, as the kings have heard rumours of Melchizedek and his priestly service. Their function appears to be to extol Melchizedek further, which is done by focusing not on Melchizedek's priesthood, but on his function as *the king of the whole earth, and the father of all kings* and the *Father of Kings*. In effect, the kings through their homage appear to subjugate themselves to Melchizedek. This layer includes a tradition of Jerusalem having been built solely to honour Melchizedek, and an aetiology of the city's name as deriving from Melchizedek, which may be dependent upon the writings of Josephus or Theophilus. There are no direct indications that the Melchizedek of this layer is exalted, but through the actions and words of the kings, the text effectively presents a highly extolled version of the priest-king.

In the final layer, presumably the youngest, we find doctrinal remarks from one of the editors of the text. Whoever wrote this section apparently felt necessitated by the exalted traits in the story and the knowledge of one or more sectarian groups believing in an exalted Melchizedek, to correct what was regarded as an erroneous belief. The comments concerning the *simple folk* who believed in Melchizedek as a God are not directly related to any of the previous layers, but concur in terminology and content with what we found in Epiphanius' *Panarion* 55.9.11–12.[570] However, both the exegetical manoeuvres to prove these exalted traditions wrong and the names given to Melchizedek's parents differ between the two texts. In the *Cave of Treasures*, the interpretation of Melchizedek set forth by Hebrews is acknowledged to be correct, but at the same time, the central passage from Heb 7:3 is said to have been caused by the author of Hebrews' lack of knowledge. The passage attempts to provide an interpretation of Melchizedek's being true to Hebrews, while at the same time avoiding the problem of exaltation. Yet by maintaining that Melchizedek was a normal man with a normal genealogy, the majority of the thrust of 7:3 has been removed.

In the *Cave of Treasures*, we thus find exalted traditions in which Melchizedek serves as an exalted priest chosen to ensure the ritual purity of

[570] The Christian interpolations appear in many ways similar to those found in the last chapters of *2 Enoch*, and further study of the possible connections could prove fruitful. This is, however, outside the scope of this dissertation.

the priesthood from Adam to Christ, polemical traditions emphasizing Melchizedek to be a human and not an exalted being, and neutral traditions narrating aetiological myths regarding the construction and naming of Jerusalem. While the exalted traditions are not as developed as those we found in, for instance, *2 Enoch* or the *Melchizedek Tractate*, the focus is again on portraying the special nature of Melchizedek's priesthood, its antiquity, and the figure's direct contact with God. The *Cave of Treasures*, with its compilation of neutral, exalted, and polemical traditions, thus presents a natural place to halt our investigation into the Melchizedek traditions, and to reflect upon the discoveries of the previous chapters.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

The foregoing chapters have attempted to trace the literary life of the Melchizedek figure over eight centuries and through forty texts and traditions. These texts employed the figure in three specific ways, corresponding to the three categories of interpretation (neutral, exalted, and polemical texts) set forth at the beginning of the dissertation. Within these categories, we identified two distinct interpretational strategies behind the ancient authors' use of the figure. The first of these puts Melchizedek at the centre of the author's theology and grants the figure a significant part to play in the writing. This group we may term the *Melchizedek-centric* texts, in line with their primary focus on the figure. These include most of the texts from the "exalted" category. The second interpretational strategy is exhibited by the texts in which Melchizedek is primarily used as a means of extolling another figure. Within Scripture and the later Jewish texts, this was primarily the figure of Abraham, while in the Christian texts, the extolled figure was Christ. These two groups may be categorised according to their textual focus as *Abraham-centric* and *Christ-centric*, respectively.

The analysis of the preceding chapters has, at each stage, sought to provide answers as to why a specific version of the Melchizedek figure was found in each text. These combined analyses enable us now to provide answers as to why the figure continuously emerges over the eight centuries we have tracked its literary life, and the reasons behind the diverse ways in which the figure is employed. These answers derive from the content of the texts and from the sociohistorical context of each author, depending on whether a given text was produced by representatives of either the *Anstalt* or the sectarian communities. Answers that will be supported by a brief summary of the primary Melchizedek figures and their purposes, as described in the previous chapters.

The first texts to include the figure were Gen 14:18–20 and Ps 110:4. The inclusion of the priest-king of Salem in Genesis set the pattern to be followed by the majority of later texts by employing Melchizedek in an *Abraham-centric* context, whereas Psalm 110 used the figure to extol an unnamed king. Through his royal and priestly functions, Melchizedek's subordination to Abraham served primarily to extol the patriarch. These two passages, however brief, were to become fertile exegetical ground from which numerous and varied traditions later grew. The first of these textual groups—the *Greek Fragments on the Life of Abraham* and *Genesis*

Apocryphon—presented close rewritings of the Genesis *Vorlage*, and thus exhibited a continued *Abraham-centric* focus. A similar use may originally have featured in *Jubilees*, though in its present, damaged state, what survives focuses primarily on establishing the importance of the tithe and its connection with the Levitical priesthood.

However, in the second group of texts, Melchizedek's role has changed significantly. In *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and 11Q13 (and perhaps also in 4Qʿ Amram and 4Q246), the Abraham figure has disappeared. Instead, the primary focus is now *Melchizedek-centric*, with Melchizedek cast as an angelic priest and champion of the sectarians. The writings in this second group are the first examples of the category of interpretation containing exalted Melchizedeks, in which Melchizedek, as the principal actor, has become exalted by the application of elements known from contemporary traditions that present angelomorphic human and individualised angel figures.

Continuing to the first century C.E., we encountered a group of texts that use the figure in related ways and are included in the category of neutral interpretations, largely following the precedent set forth by the *Abraham-centric* texts. The writings in this category acknowledge the importance of Melchizedek, yet employ the figure primarily to strengthen various arguments. In the first century, examples of this category include the writings of Philo and Josephus. In these, Melchizedek was, through creative rewriting and allegorical interpretation, employed to demonstrate, among other things, the antiquity of Jerusalem, the importance of tithing, and the manner according to which a true king should rule.

In the same century, we also found a text that marks the return of the exalted interpretations: *2 Enoch*. In this text, God directly created the *Wunderkind* Melchizedek to provide humanity with a semidivine priestly saviour figure. *2 Enoch*'s Melchizedek is, by all accounts, an exalted being, and the concluding chapters present a decidedly *Melchizedek-centric* text. Our analysis of a contemporary text, Hebrews, and its use of Melchizedek presented an interpretation according to which the author of Hebrews was, to some extent, aware of exalted Melchizedek traditions. Yet despite the author's awareness of such exegesis, Hebrews uses the Melchizedek figure primarily to denigrate the Levitical priesthood and to extol the figure of Christ. This use is structurally related to the *Abraham-centric* texts, though the focus on Christ distinguishes Hebrews' use of Melchizedek as *Christ-centric*—this is a use in which Melchizedek's priesthood was interpreted as a model of Christ's; while the author regarded Melchizedek as central to his exegesis, once the priesthood of Christ has been sufficiently established, the figure was discarded.

In Chapters 4 to 6, we left the first century and analysed a number of texts presenting comparable Melchizedeks. The first group of texts,

analysed in Chapter 4, presented further examples of a Melchizedek used within the neutral category of interpretation. The majority of the writings of the early Church Fathers continued the *Christ-centric* use established by Hebrews, although Melchizedek was also employed to present a model of the Eucharist and as supportive evidence against the Jewish traditions of circumcision and observance of the Sabbath.

The texts analysed in Chapter 5 presented evidence of continued traditions portraying exalted Melchizedeks. Whereas the earliest examples of an exalted Melchizedek appeared in Jewish sectarian writings, the sectarian communities responsible for the texts analysed in Chapter 5 appear to have primarily belonged to the Gnostic sphere, although in the heresiologies analysed, we found evidence of communities that apparently remained members of the Christian Church, despite their belief in an exalted Melchizedek. The first of the texts analysed in Chapter 5, the *Melchizedek Tractate*, presented an extensive *Melchizedek-centric* rewriting of Genesis and Hebrews. However, rather than discarding the figure as the author of Hebrews had done, Melchizedek in the *Melchizedek Tractate* became exalted in new ways, through a Melchizedek exegesis focusing on the figure's past, present, and future functions as a priestly saviour and champion of the righteous.

Further Gnostic rewritings of the Melchizedek figure were found in *2 Jeu* and *Pistis Sophia*. In these texts, we found evidence of several Melchizedek traditions compiled into somewhat cohesive wholes. Although diverse in their specific exalted Melchizedeks, the shared focus was on Melchizedek's functions in regards to the liberation and purification of the souls of the righteous. As a high-ranking being in the elaborate Gnostic hierarchies, Melchizedek resembled a celestial priest involved in the inner workings of the forgiveness and salvation of the souls. Together with the *Melchizedekians* and the related sects described in the heresiologies of the Christian authors, these *Melchizedek-centric* traditions presented Melchizedeks "strangely transmogrified and, indeed, often virtually unrecognizable,"[571] from the figure's first appearance in Scripture. The *Melchizedek-centric* texts and the exalted traditions cast Melchizedek as a guardian of the righteous, a celestial high priest in charge of the heavenly hosts, an opponent of the forces of darkness (be they Belial, Melchiresha, or various archons), a psychopomp saviour of souls, and a being variously identified as an angel, Christ, the Holy Spirit, or even God himself. The number of surviving traditions, and the reference to the existence of several more in the heresiologies, indicates that the texts we have analysed represent only part of the exalted Melchizedek traditions in existence at the time. Moreover, as argued in Section 3.8, some of these

[571] Davila, "King", 220.

traditions may predate our material, while several later texts (such as the *Apocryphal Story of Melchizedek* and the *Book of the Bee*) provide evidence that exalted Melchizedeks would continue to emerge long after our time period.[572]

While the sectarian communities continued to produce Melchizedek-centric texts, a different category was established. The texts analysed within Chapter 6 provided examples of extensive and related derogatory treatments of the Melchizedek figure. This tradition appears to have begun in the *Fragmentary Targums*, was developed further in *Targum Neofiti*, and culminated in the Tractate *Nedarim*. In these texts, Melchizedek was at first reidentified as Shem, and thus removed from the Genesis story. Later, the priesthood was removed from Melchizedek by God and transferred to Abraham. The exegetical treatment of Melchizedek in these texts is distinguished by the primary purpose of using the figure in a polemical attempt to lessen the increasing importance of the Melchizedekian priesthood.

Our analysis has thus not only highlighted the surprising amount of Melchizedek-focused exegesis in our time period, but also the different social and historic factors that led to the various interpretations of Melchizedek. Our analysis has shown the majority of the *Melchizedek-centric* texts and the exalted Melchizedeks to be the product of sectarian communities, while most of the texts in the polemical category of interpretation derive from authors representing the *Anstalt*. This is especially apparent in the case of the polemical texts produced by rabbinic authors, and the critique of the exalted traditions found in Epiphanius' *Panarion*, among other texts. We also note that the majority of the texts analysed present a singular focus upon the priesthood of Melchizedek. In the *Melchizedek-centric* texts, we found recurring attempts to establish a connection between the Melchizedekian priesthood and the priesthood of the author's community. However, in the neutral and polemical texts, Melchizedek's priesthood is instead used to enhance the importance of the texts' focal figure. This focus is best exemplified by the polemical texts and their attempts to distance Melchizedek from his priesthood, culminating in the *Nedarim* Tractate, with Abraham cast as the principal priest within this priesthood.

This raises the question of *whom* this polemical effort was directed at and *why*. While the texts presenting exalted Melchizedeks were products of sectarian communities, the polemical passages were all written by authors

[572] Indeed, the figure has been the focus of theological rewritings up to modern times. As an example of this, the work of Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist* (Eng. trans.; New York: HarperCollins, 1993), has introduced more than 65 million readers to a Melchizedek cast as an eternal being, who wears the ephod of a High Priest and serves as a psychopomp helper to those seeking to experience the divine.

representing the *Anstalt* of their time. In this case, the responses primarily came from rabbinic authors, although an emphasis on disproving the exalted Melchizedek traditions was also found within the heresiologies of Christian authors. The answer to why the polemical tradition arose, and at whom the derogatory treatment of Melchizedek was directed, thus appear to be that the polemical texts constitute the response of the representatives of the *Anstalt* to the exalted Melchizedek traditions. Through these countertexts and their polemical treatments of the figure, the authors sought to reduce the importance of the figure and to separate Melchizedek from his priesthood—an exegesis made necessary by the exaltation of the figure by sectarian authors.

DANSK RESUMÉ

I afhandlingen *A Priest for All Generations: An Investigation into the Use of the Melchizedek Figure from Genesis to the Cave of Treasures* undersøges Melchizedek-figurens litterære liv i mere end fyrre skrifter fra perioden ca. 400 f.v.t. til 400 e.v.t. Disse skrifter afslører, at præste-kongen fra Genesis 14,18-20 var en central og ofte anvendt figur i perioden, heriblandt genskrevet som noget så forskelligt som menneskehedens frelser, der kravler ud af sin døde mor, sjælenes befrier fra arkonternes fangenskab samt beskyldt for at være søn af en skøge.

I dette studium inddeles de divergerende formål med anvendelsen af Melchizedek-figuren i tre gennemgående kategorier; 1) den ophøjende fortolkningsstrategi, hvori Melchizedek ophøjes til en overnaturlig figur, 2) den negative, eller polemiske, fortolkningsstrategi hvori Melchizedeks betydning søges reduceret, samt 3) den neutrale fortolkningsstrategi, hvori Melchizedeks betydning anerkendes, men anvendes til en ophøjelse af andre figurer og i forbindelse med teologiske diskussioner. Der argumenteres for, at de to første fortolkningskategorier er forbundne, ved det at den polemiske er reaktionen på den ophøjende, idet denne fortolkningsstrategi primært anvendtes af sekteriske samfund med det hovedformål at etablere et alternativt præsteskab, helt eller delvist baseret på den ophøjede Melchizedek-figur. Dette affødte igen produktionen af polemiske tekster, der forsøgte at umuliggøre et sådant præsteskab på vegne af det etablerede religiøse samfunds, i afhandlingen betegnet *Anstalt*.

Afhandlingen falder i syv kapitler. Kapitel 1 fungerer som indledning til afhandlingen med en gennemgang af tidligere forskning i Melchizedek-figuren og en præsentation af de i afhandlingen anvendte begreber *Anstalt* og sekt, samt en behandling af begrebet *Rewritten Bible*. På baggrund af dette foretages i kapitel 2 og 3 en undersøgelse i kronologisk rækkefølge af samtlige, så vidt vides, forekomster af Melchizedek-figuren frem til afslutningen af det første århundrede e.v.t. Undersøgelsen fokuserer på Melchizedek-figurens udformning og formål i hvert enkelt skrift. På den baggrund anvendes de tre ovenfor nævnte fortolkningskategorier som udgangspunkt for de tre efterfølgende kapitler (4-6), med en undersøgelse af de centrale tekster inden for hver kategori. De udvalgte tekster, som indeholder majoriteten af Melchizedek-referencer i perioden frem til slutningen af det fjerde århundrede, undersøges ligeledes kronologisk.

Undersøgelsen af Melchizedek-figurens litterære liv indledes i kapitel 2 med en behandling af de to første, kendte forekomster af Melchizedek-figuren: Genesis 14,18-20 og Salme 110,4. Kapitel 3 undersøger dernæst de følgende tekster og deres versioner af Melchizedek; *Græsk Fragment om Abrahams Liv*, *Jubilæerbogen*, *Genesisapokryfen*, *Sange til Sabbatsofferet*, *Amrams Visioner*, 4Q426 og *Melkizedekteksten*. I samme kapitel undersøges desuden Melchizedek-figuren i fire af Filon af Alexandrias' skrifter (*Quaestiones in Genesin*, *De Abrahamo*, *De congressu gratia* og *Legum allegoriae*), i *Anden Enoksbog*, Hebræerbrevet samt i Josefus' to skrifter *Bellum judaicum* og *Antiquitates judaicae*.

Hernæst følger i kapitel 4 undersøgelsen af tekster i den neutrale fortolkningskategori. Disse udgøres af Justin Martyrs *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, Theofilus af Antiokias *Ad Autolycum*, Tertullians *Adversus Judaeos* og *Adversus Marcionem*, Cyprianus af Karthagos *Ad Quirinum* og *Ad Caecilium*, *Targum Onkelos* samt den babylonske Talmuds traktat *Baba Batra*.

Det følgende kapitel, kapitel 5, undersøger de tekster, der fremstår som eksempler på den polemiske fortolkningskategori: Clemens af Alexandrias *Stromata*, de *Fragmentariske Targumer*, *Targum Neofiti*, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, samt den babylonske Talmuds traktat *Nedarim*.

Det sidste af afhandlingens undersøgende kapitler, kapitel 6, indeholder en undersøgelse af tekstuelle repræsentanter for den fortolkningsstrategi, hvori Melchizedek-figuren på forskellig vis anses for en ophøjet figur. Dette drejer sig om *Melkisedektraktaten*, *Anden Jeusbog*, *Pistis Sophia*, *Bala'izah Fragment nr. 52*, den babylonske Talmuds traktat *Sukkah* samt *Skattehulen*. I samme kapitel behandles desuden en række sekter, der fortolker Melchizedek som et ophøjet væsen, sekter hvis teologi i dag primært kendes fra kirkefædrenes hæresiologier: Hippolytus' *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, Pseudo-Tertullians *Adversus omnes haereses* samt Epiphanius af Salamis' *Panarion*.

Afhandlingens undersøgelse påviser, som diskuteret i konklusionen, kapitel 7, at de tidligste eksempler på anvendelsen af Melchizedek primært tjente til at ophøje patriarken Abraham, en *Abraham-centrisk* anvendelse påbegyndt i Genesis. Senere tekster frembyder eksempler på en anvendelse af Melchizedek primært som led i en argumentation, eksemplificeret ved Filon og Josefus' skrifter, det være sig vigtigheden af at give tiende til Templet eller om Jerusalems ætiologi. En anvendelse der også var dominerende i den neutrale fortolkningskategori, hvor de kristne forfattere dog primært anvendte Melchizedek-figuren med et *Kristus*-, frem for *Abraham-centrisk*, fokus.

I løbet af den i afhandlingen undersøgte tidsperiode fremkommer desuden en række tekstuelle eksempler på den fortolkningsstrategi, hvori Melchizedek-figuren fremstår som et ophøjet væsen. Eksempler på denne

fortolkningsstrategi forekom blandt skriftfundene fra Qumran, i tekster fra det første århundrede e.v.t., samt fra den senere tid. Undersøgelsen af disse tekster sandsynliggjorde eksistensen af talrige Melchizedek-traditioner, et antal væsentligt undervurderet i tidligere Melchizedek-undersøgelser. I disse traditioner er Melchizedek identificeret blandt andet som yppersteprælestelig engel, Helligånden, Guds søn eller Gud selv. Undersøgelsen af disse forekomster påviser, at en ophøjet Melchizedek var en central figur i mange sekteriske samfunds teologi. Gennem analysen af disse sekteriske skrifter viser anvendelsen sig i de fleste tilfælde at være et forsøg på gennem Melchizedek-figuren at etablere et præsteskab, der overgik det etablerede religiøse systems præsteskab.

Som en del af afhandlingens konklusion argumenteres for, at det var denne sekteriske brug af Melchizedek, som forårsagede den polemiske fortolkningsstrategis fremkomst, eksemplificeret ved den beslægtede tradition identificeret i de palæstinensiske targumer og i traktat *Nedarim*. Disse forfattedes af *Anstaltens* repræsentanter, som modsvar til de sekteriske Melchizedek-præsteskaber. En fortolkningsstrategi, der gennem en genskrivning af Melchizedek-traditionen ikke blot fjernede den problematiske præste-konge fra Genesis-beretningen, men samtidig forsøgte at fjerne fundamentet for de sekteriske forfatteres Melchizedek-funderede præsteskaber.

Herigennem fremviser afhandlingens undersøgelse af Melchizedek-figurens genskrivninger vidnesbyrd om, hvorledes forfattere i antikken konstruerede og dekonstruerede figurer ud fra teologiske nødvendigheder. Påvisningen af afhandlingens grundlæggende tese demonstrerer, hvorledes Melchizedek var i centrum for en lang række sekteriske samfund, der søgte at skabe et præsteskab centreret om den første præst nævnt i Det Gamle Testamente. Samtidig udgør Melchizedek et eksempel på, hvorledes den etablerede *Anstalt* søgte at modsvare denne tendens og igennem polemiske genskrivninger at umuliggøre anvendelsen af Melchizedek-figuren som fundamentet for sekteriske, konkurrerende præsteskaber.

SUMMARY

The dissertation *A Priest for All Generations: An Investigation into the Use of the Melchizedek Figure from Genesis to the Cave of Treasures* explores the literary life of the figure of Melchizedek through more than forty texts and over eight centuries, from ca. 400 B.C.E. to 400 C.E. These texts reveal the priest-king of Gen 14:18–20 to be a central and frequently employed figure throughout this period. In them, the figure is rewritten in diverse ways, including as the saviour of mankind who enters into this world by delivering himself from his dead mother, as a liberator of souls from their imprisonment by the archons, and slanderiously, as the mere son of a harlot.

The study considers the varied ways in which the figure is employed under three categories of interpretation: 1) an exalting interpretational strategy, wherein Melchizedek is exalted and becomes a semidivine figure; 2) a polemical approach, in which the author seeks to reduce or to entirely remove the importance of the figure, and 3) a neutral interpretational strategy, in which the figure's importance is acknowledged, but where Melchizedek is primarily used as a means of extolling another figure or to strengthen various arguments. The study argues that the first two categories are contingent; the polemical interpretational strategy is a reaction to the exalting approach that was used by sectarian societies to establish an alternative priesthood based on Melchizedek. This necessitated the polemical texts in which such exegetical manoeuvres were nullified by the authors representing the established religious community (the *Anstalt*).

The study consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 presents the aims of the research, the selection of texts, and an outline of the study, in addition to reviewing previous studies of the Melchizedek figure. The terms *Anstalt* and sect are also discussed here, as is the concept of *Rewritten Bible*. Based on this discussion, Chapters 2 and 3 commence a chronological examination of all known examples of the Melchizedek figure up to the end of the first century C.E., focusing on the description and purpose of the figure in each text. The following three chapters (4–6) make use of the previously mentioned categories of interpretation, each chapter discussing the primary texts within one of the categories. The chosen texts, which comprise the majority of references to the Melchizedek figure up to the closing of the 4th century, are treated in a chronological order.

The analysis of the Melchizedek figure's literary life commences in Chapter 2, with an examination of the two earliest known occurrences: Gen

14:18–20 and Ps 110:4. Chapter 3 then examines the specifics of the figure within the following fifteen texts: the *Greek Fragment on the Life of Abraham*; the *Book of Jubilees*; the *Genesis Apocryphon*; the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*; 4Qʿ Amram; 4Q426; *11QMelchizedek*; Philo of Alexandria's *Quaestiones in Genesin*, *De Abrahamo*, *De congressu gratia*, and *Legum allegoriae*; the *2 Book of Enoch*; the Epistle to the Hebrews; and Flavius Josephus' *Bellum judaicum* and *Antiquitates judaicae*.

Chapter 4 then turns to the texts that treat the Melchizedek figure neturally. These are Justin Martyr's *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, Theophilius of Antioch's *Ad Autolycum*, Tertullian's *Adversus Judaeos* and *Adversus Marcionem*, Cyprian of Carthage's *Ad Quirinum* and *Ad Caecilium*, *Targum Onqelos*, and the Babylonian Talmud *Baba Batra* tractate.

The fifth chapter investigates the case of the texts that treat Melchizedek polemically, namely Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata*, the *Fragmentary Targums*, *Targum Neofiti*, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, and the Babylonian Talmud *Nedarim* tractate.

The last of the investigative chapters, Chapter 6, proceeds to analyse those texts that present the interpretational strategy of exalting the figure in various ways, namely the *Melchizedek Tractate*, the *2 Book of Jeu*, the *Pistis Sophia*, the *Bala'izah Fragment No. 52*, the Babylonian Talmud *Sukkah* tractate, and the *Cave of Treasures*. This chapter also examines the evidence of numerous sects and their beliefs in an exalted Melchizedek, evidence of which is primarily found in Hippolytus' *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, Pseudo-Tertullian's *Adversus omnes haereses*, and Epiphanius of Salamis' *Panarion*.

The conclusion to the study is presented in Chapter 7. There, the evidence from the analysis of the previous chapters is used to argue that the earliest examples of the use of the Melchizedek figure served primarily to extol the patriarch Abraham—an *Abraham-centric* use begun in Genesis. Later texts revealed examples of the figure being employed primarily as supporting evidence in theological discussions—as exemplified by the writings of Philo and Josephus, who used Melchizedek to demonstrate, for instance, the importance of offering tithe to the Temple and the aetiology of Jerusalem. A similar use is predominant in the later examples of the neutral use of the figure, where Christian authors increasingly turned to Melchizedek, albeit with a *Christ-centric*, rather than *Abraham-centric*, focus.

A number of textual examples of the interpretational strategy of exalting Melchizedek were also produced within the study's time period. Examples of these were apparent among the texts found at Qumran, texts from the 1st century C.E., and texts from the following centuries. The analysis of these texts showed the existence of Melchizedek traditions in quantities significantly underestimated by previous studies of the figure. In these

traditions, Melchizedek has become identified as a high-priestly angel, the Holy Spirit, the Son of God, or even as God himself. The study of these traditions demonstrated the exalted Melchizedek to be a central figure in the theology of several sectarian communities. By analysing the texts produced by these communities, it was shown that the figure was predominantly employed in an attempt to establish a sectarian priesthood superior to that of the *Anstalt*.

As part of the study's conclusion, it was argued that it was just this sectarian use of Melchizedek that brought about the polemical interpretational strategy, best exemplified by the tradition identified in the Palastinian Targumim and the Babylonian Talmud tractate *Nedarim*. The texts in this category were composed by representatives of the *Anstalt* as exegetical countermeasures to the sectarian Melchizedek priesthoods. These were interpretational strategies that removed the figure from the Genesis *Vorlage*, thus rendering it impossible for any sectarian group to claim that its priesthood derived from Melchizedek.

In this way, the study shows that the rewriting of the Melchizedek figure provides evidence of the ways in which religious figures were constructed and deconstructed, according to the ancient authors' theology and situational necessities. The study thus shows that Melchizedek was at the theological centre of sectarian societies throughout our time period—societies which sought to establish ties between the first priest mentioned in Hebrew Scripture and their own priesthood. In addition, the figure proved a unique example of how representatives of the established *Anstalt* constructed countertexts that, through their polemical treatment of the figure, rendered impossible the use of Melchizedek as the foundation of sectarian priesthoods.

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